

# 1 KINGS

## INTRODUCTION

First and Second Kings is the second in a series of three double books: 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. Originally, the double books were single books -- one book of Samuel, one of Kings, and one of Chronicles. The Septuagint translators were the ones who made the divisions, and they did so more or less for the convenience of the reader. I think that it probably was a very wise decision.

Although the writer is unknown, 1 and 2 Kings were written while the first temple was still standing ([1Kings 8:8](#)). Jeremiah is considered to be the traditional writer, while modern scholarship assigns the authorship to "the prophets."

The theme of these two Books of Kings is found in this expression that occurs nine times in 1 Kings: "as David his father." In other words, we are following the line of David, and each king was measured by the standard set by David. Very frankly, it was a human standard, and it was not the highest standard in the world. But we find that king after king failed to attain even to it. Thank God there were those who did measure up to it.

However, we will find that this section of Scripture is a sorry and sordid section. It is history, and it reveals the decline and fall of the kingdom: first the kingdom was divided, and then each kingdom fell.

There are key verses that summarize the thrust of these two books. The first key verses describe the decline and fall of the northern kingdom: "For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day" ([2Kings 17:22-23](#)).

The second key verse describes the fall of the southern kingdom: "And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land" ([2Kings 25:21](#)).

In 1 Kings we have the record of the division of the kingdom, and 2 Kings records the collapse of the kingdom. Considering the two books as a unit, they open with King David, and they close with the king of Babylon. They are the book of man's rule over God's kingdom -- and the results are not good, of course. The throne on earth must be in tune with the throne in heaven if blessings are to come and benefits are to accrue to God's people. Yet man's plan cannot overthrow God's purposes, as we shall see.

First and Second Kings are actually a continuation of the narrative that was begun in First and Second Samuel. These four books can be considered as a whole since they trace the history of the nation from the time of its greatest extension, influence, and prosperity under David and Solomon to the division, then captivity and exile of both kingdoms.

The moral teaching of these books is to show man his inability to rule himself and the world. In these four historical books we get a very graphic view of the rise and fall of the kingdom of Israel.

## Chapter 1

**THEME:** Adonijah's abortive coup; Solomon anointed king

The Books of Kings continue the narrative that was begun in the Books of Samuel. In this first chapter David is a senile old man. One of his sons, Adonijah, attempts to seize the throne. David, aroused by Nathan and Bathsheba, orders another son, Solomon, anointed as king of Israel. This is a tremendous chapter that opens 1 Kings.

### **David's Declining Strength And Adonijah's Plot (1:1-10)**

We begin on a sad note.

Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat [[1Kings 1:1](#)].

David is now an old man. It is difficult to conceive of him as an old man. We always think of David as a shepherd boy. It is hard to picture him as an old, senile man who needs nursing care.

His son Adonijah takes advantage of him in this condition. He attempts to put himself on the throne and make himself king. Of course, that is not going to fit in with God's plan. A great deal of intrigue goes on -- intrigue is one of the things that characterize the reign of David.

Let us find out who Adonijah is. First Kings is the first time that he is mentioned in any prominent connection.

Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom [[1Kings 1:5-6](#)].

Adonijah was David's fourth son, born to him in Hebron ([2Sam. 3:4](#)). His mother was Haggith, one of David's wives, of whom we know nothing except that her name means "festive."

"Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself." That word exalted is interesting because there is a verse of Scripture that you can put right down over it: "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" ([Luke 14:11](#)). "He that exalteth himself shall be abased" is going to be true of Adonijah. He certainly exalted himself.

The Scriptures tell us many things about Adonijah. He was a very proud young man with a high regard for himself. He was conceited, and you can detect in him some of the traits of his half brother Absalom who had led a rebellion against David. Adonijah, had something not been done, would also have led a rebellion against his father. David never had a reputation of disciplining his family. He had a disorganized family life; organized chaos reigned in David's palace, and Adonijah took full advantage of the situation. David

never rebuked him. When he did wrong, I think David just smiled over his boy as an old indulgent man would do.

**And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him [1Kings 1:7].**

Joab, who had been loyal to David for many years, now gives his allegiance to Adonijah. You can see his position; he is feathering his nest and preparing for the future. David is old, and in a short time he will be gone. Joab wants to be on the winning side. The only one on the scene who is making any move toward the throne is Adonijah. Joab has had tremendous influence in the palace and court of David. He has been David's right-hand man from the very beginning, and I am confident that he was loyal to David. I do not believe he would have permitted Adonijah to touch a hair of David's head, but he does want someone to come to the throne at this time. No other son of David seems to be a likely candidate. That is interesting because it implies that Joab would not have chosen Solomon to be king. In my judgment, David's choice was Absalom, not Solomon, and now he will probably smile when Adonijah makes his move for the throne, because he was very much like Absalom.

Now we find that Adonijah made a banquet. That is always a good way to get some support for any project. If you want to do something, have a church banquet, and you will receive a lot of support.

**And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants [1Kings 1:9].**

Adonijah's intention was to announce at the banquet that he was king. By right of primogeniture he probably had a claim upon the throne. We are told that he was older than Solomon; according to the rules and regulations of the day, the oldest son was always the crown prince and was the successor. Absalom, of course, was dead, which put Adonijah next in line.

It was a bold move to send invitations to the king's sons, especially in light of the fact that Solomon did not receive an invitation; he was left out.

**But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not [1Kings 1:10].**

Adonijah knew that Nathan would be on Bathsheba's side. Nathan was the one who guided David during that awful period of David's great sin. Bathsheba, of course, was Solomon's mother. Now Nathan goes to her.

### **The Plan Of Nathan And Bathsheba (1:11-33)**

**Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? [1Kings 1:11].**

Adonijah was beginning to move behind David's back -- he was not consulting the king at all. Now Nathan begins to move.

Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? [[1Kings 1:13](#)].

David had made a promise to Bathsheba. When their second son was born (their first son had died), David promised her that he would be the next king. That son is Solomon. Now David was making no move to put him on the throne. I do not think David was enthusiastic about making him the king.

**Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words [[1Kings 1:14](#)].**

Nathan is saying, "We had better alert David to what is taking place. You tell David what is happening, and I will enforce your words." Nathan wanted to wake up this senile king to what was going on right under his nose.

**And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.**

**And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? [[1Kings 1:15-16](#)].**

It seems as though David had not seen Bathsheba for a long time.

**And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.**

**And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not:**

**And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.**

**And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him [[1Kings 1:17-20](#)].**

David had made no move to pick a successor from his several sons. Probably Adonijah was a very attractive, handsome, capable boy, and there were many people who wanted him for their next king.

**Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.**

**And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.**

And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? [[1Kings 1:21-24](#)].

Nathan and Bathsheba wanted to know if David had chosen Adonijah to reign after him. David, of course, knew nothing about it.

Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day [[1Kings 1:28-30](#)].

When David spoke to Bathsheba about Solomon, notice that he said, "your son," and not "our son." David was not too enthusiastic about this boy. I don't think they had too much in common, as we shall soon see.

Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon [[1Kings 1:31-33](#)].

The mule was the animal kings rode upon, while the horse was the animal of warfare. You will find in the Book of Revelation that the riding of the four horses speaks of turmoil and warfare. Also the Lord Jesus Christ will come again to this earth riding on a white horse, which speaks of warfare. He will come to put down rebellion on the earth; and before Him every knee shall bow. When the Lord came to earth the first time, He did not come to make war; He came to offer Himself as Israel's Messiah, and as such He rode a little donkey into Jerusalem. That is the animal upon which kings ride. Now David's own royal mount, a mule, is to be brought out, and Solomon is to be put upon it.

### **Solomon Is Anointed As King (1:38-53)**

So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon [[1Kings 1:38-39](#)].

Now there is no question as to whom David has chosen to be his successor. Solomon is to be the next king.

And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar? [[1Kings 1:40-41](#)].

The messenger who brought the details to Adonijah concluded with this:

And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed.

And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it [[1Kings 1:47-48](#)].

David put his seal of approval upon Solomon as king. David was an old man, and soon he would sleep with his fathers.

And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar [[1Kings 1:49-50](#)].

Adonijah's supporters were afraid and got out of there in a hurry. They knew they would be regarded as traitors. Adonijah, fearing for his life, ran to the tabernacle and caught hold of the horns of the altar for sanctuary.

And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me today that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die [[1Kings 1:51-52](#)].

Solomon is being very fair with Adonijah. If Adonijah shows himself to be a loyal subject, then nothing will happen to him.

So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house [[1Kings 1:53](#)].

Adonijah, brought into the king's presence, submitted himself to the new king. Then Solomon dismissed him in peace.

## Chapter 2

**THEME:** David's deathbed charge to Solomon and the beginning of Solomon's reign

This chapter records David's final instructions to Solomon before his death and Solomon's wise execution of David's wishes.

### **David's Charge To Solomon (2:1-9)**

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man [[1Kings 2:1-2](#)].

First of all David said, "I go the way of all the earth." This is the way of man. In [Romans 5:12](#) the apostle Paul says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." By man came death, and death is passed on to all men because all have sinned. The sin of Adam has been passed down to you and me; if the Lord tarries, we will go through the doorway of death. Why? Because this is the way of all the earth, the conclusion of this life's journey. It is not a very attractive subject. We don't like to think about death today because it is something a little too depressing for the human race.

In [Psalm 23:4](#) David says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." David is not speaking about the fact that he has come to his deathbed. As someone has said, "The moment that gives you life begins also to take it away from you." David is likening life to a walk through a valley. At birth you start down through the valley, and the farther you walk the narrower it gets. At the end of the valley is death. All of us are walking through that valley today. You may be in robust health today, but you can be dead before the sun goes down.

Next David says to Solomon, "Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man." The Lord Jesus Christ put it like this to the crowd who had come to see John the Baptist: "But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses" ([Matt. 11:8](#)). John the Baptist had been brought up in the wilderness. He was rugged. Our Lord was a rugged man also. I don't like the paintings I see of Him because they make Him almost effeminate, although some of the more recent pictures have tried to make Him look more masculine. May I say to you that if you could have seen Him when He walked upon this earth, you would have seen a rugged man. He had calluses on His hands -- He was a carpenter. He was God, but He was a real man. He was very man of very man and very God of very God.

Solomon was not quite like his father. David was a man. Solomon was not much of a man. David was rugged. Solomon had been brought up in the palaces -- in fact, he had been brought up in the women's palaces. Why did Solomon have a thousand women

around him? My friend, the answer is quite obvious. All Solomon knew about was women. He was a sissy if there ever was one. I don't think he and David had much in common. So David says to him, "I have made you king. I want you to play the man. I don't think you are one, but do the best that you can." This is the injunction David gave to this boy who had been brought up with soft clothing. Solomon was not like David. He was not like John the Baptist. He was not like our Lord, either. But now he is the king of Israel.

And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel [[1Kings 2:3-4](#)].

David urges Solomon to stay close to the Lord and to the Word of God. His advice to this young man is very important.

There is very little attention ever given to David's legacy to Solomon, but I believe that what David left to him enabled him to become one of the great kings of the earth. In fact, Solomon is probably one of the best known kings who has ever lived.

Eason, in his New Bible Survey (Zondervan), enumerates David's legacy to Solomon:

1. He transferred the leadership of the nation from the house of Saul and the tribe of Benjamin to Judah and established the royal house of David. This becomes all-important as we shall see when we get to the New Testament. The Gospel of Matthew opens with the statement, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" ([Matt. 1:1](#)). Then in [Luke 1:31-32](#) the angel Gabriel said to Mary, "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Only a descendant of David is to occupy the throne of Israel.

2. He established Jerusalem as the Holy City and as the religious center and national capital for all Jews. This has continued down to this day. When Israel took the city of Jerusalem from the Arabs in the Six Day War of 1967, they declared that they had no intention of giving it up because it is a legacy that goes back to David. Jerusalem was David's favorite city, and he made it the capital for the nation of Israel. Solomon beautified the city by building the temple and making it the religious center of Israel. We should note, however, that it was David who made the preparations for the temple.

3. He stamped out idolatry, practically speaking, and made the worship of Jehovah universal in the land. This was his most important contribution.

4. He made conquests of many nations which paid tribute to Israel and its king. He extended the borders of the country to Egypt on the south, and to the River Euphrates on the north and east. David is actually the one who extended Israel's borders farther than they had ever been extended before or since. The peace during the reign of Solomon was possible because David had subdued Israel's enemies.

5. Although an Oriental monarch with a sizable harem, David's foreign marriages were largely political and relatively free from religious and moral corruption. Having a harem was the custom of that day, but God did not approve of David's many wives, and it was largely due to them that he was in hot water all of the time. The many sons that were born to him by these women caused constant dissension inside the palace. It was something that caused David woe and sorrow all of his life. It was Solomon, and not David, who was influenced by a foreign wife. It is true that David committed an awful sin, but it occurred before his marriage to Bathsheba. There was not even a breath of scandal after that.

6. David was a poet and musician who endeared himself to the people as the "sweet psalmist of Israel" and gave to us at least seventy-three psalms.

7. David planned the temple, which was to exalt the religious life of the nation and the worship of Jehovah, although he was not permitted to build the Lord's house.

8. Although there was still rivalry of a sort between the ten tribes of the north and Judah and Benjamin in the south -- and had been since the death of Saul and his son -- David had no serious difficulty in uniting all tribes under his rule and making Jerusalem the national capital.

9. At the time of David's death, Israel was second to none in power and military prowess, and the people had a large measure of peace and freedom, as every man "sat under his own vine and fig tree." The peace that Solomon enjoyed during his reign was a peace that had been made by David during his reign.

And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood [1Kings 2:8-9].

David is revealing here what seems like a vengeful spirit, but it actually is not. Although Shimei had demonstrated that he was a traitor, because David had made an oath not to touch him, Shimei was still alive. David was a man of his word. Now, however, he tells Solomon to keep his watchful eye on him, and if he reveals any of his treachery, Solomon is to deal with him accordingly. The time does come, by the way, when Solomon deals with Shimei, but only after he disobeys and reveals that he is indeed a traitor.

## **David's Death (2:10-12)**

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly [[1Kings 2:10-12](#)].

There is a note of sadness in the death of David. He had been a great man of God. Do you recall the first son of David and Bathsheba? He died when he was just a few days old. David said of him, "He will never come to me, but I will go to him." Now David has gone to be with that child.

Solomon, now that his father is gone, comes to the throne. At the change of any dynasty or ruler there is always a time of turmoil and great change.

### **Solomon's Accession To The Throne (2:13-46)**

And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on [[1Kings 2:13-14](#)].

Even though Solomon is now on the throne, Adonijah has not given up the idea about wanting to be king. He comes to Bathsheba still harboring this thought. She does not have much confidence in him and inquires about his mission. He says that it is a peaceful one. She says, "Say on" -- in other words, "I'm listening."

And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD [[1Kings 2:15](#)].

He is saying that he was more popular than Solomon and the people wanted him as king.

And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on.

And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife [[1Kings 2:16-17](#)].

He is saying, "Since the kingdom has been taken away from me, I have only one small request. I would like Abishag for my wife." Abishag, you recall, nursed David during his last days.

And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.

Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.

And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife [[1Kings 2:18-21](#)].

This was an audacious request, but Adonijah knew that Solomon would not deny his mother anything. That is the reason he went to Bathsheba instead of going directly to Solomon.

And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life [[1Kings 2:22-23](#)].

What Adonijah was actually doing was making a move toward the throne. He was doing a dangerous thing, but he was being very clever about it all. Adonijah was Solomon's elder brother, and Solomon, of course, had been aware of his brother's move to seize the throne before David named a successor. Although Bathsheba, in her simplicity, felt that Adonijah's request for Abishag was reasonable, Solomon's keen mind instantly penetrated the plot.

Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died [[1Kings 2:24-25](#)].

Adonijah's death was a brutal thing, of course, but his death eliminated a contender for the throne. It was necessary to execute him in order to establish Solomon on the throne. As long as Adonijah lived, he would continue to connive and plot in an attempt to seize the throne.

Now, having removed Adonijah, Solomon realized it would be necessary to remove from positions of influence those who had supported him.

And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh [[1Kings 2:26-27](#)].

Abiathar, a descendent of Aaron, was removed from his priestly office and sent home in disgrace because he had participated in Adonijah's rebellion. The only reason he was not

executed was because of his faithfulness to David during Absalom's rebellion. This ended the line of Eli.

Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, through he turned not after Absalom, And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.

And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me [[1Kings 2:28-30](#)].

When Joab heard what happened to Abiathar and Adonijah, he took off for the tall timber. He ran to the tabernacle of the Lord and caught hold of the horns of the altar for sanctuary. Solomon chose Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, to be Joab's executioner. He went after Joab and asked him to come outside the tabernacle. Joab refused, saying, "I'll die here if I have to die."

And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah [[1Kings 2:31-32](#)].

Joab had been a bloody man.

Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness [[1Kings 2:33-34](#)].

He was executed because of his part in a rebellion against Solomon.

Shimei was another traitor. David would not touch him because he had given his word that he would not. Solomon now puts restrictions on him.

And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither [[1Kings 2:36](#)].

Solomon wanted Shimei to be where he could keep his eye on him. Wherever Shimei went, he sowed seeds of rebellion. Solomon wanted to watch his every move.

For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days [[1Kings 2:37-38](#)].

Solomon commanded Shimei to build a home in Jerusalem and to remain within the city limits. He was forbidden to return and live with his own tribe. Shimei promised to be obedient to Solomon's terms.

And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath.

And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath [[1Kings 2:39-40](#)].

Shimei went outside the city limits. He did this in direct disobedience to Solomon's orders. Solomon was told what Shimei had done; so the king sent for him.

**Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?**

The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head;

And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon [[1Kings 2:43-46](#)].

With Shimei's death Solomon had completed the charge made to him by David his father. Solomon had removed most of the contenders to the throne. Now he could reign in peace.

## CHAPTERS 3 AND 4

### **Chapter 3**

**THEME:** Solomon's prayer for wisdom and God's answer

In the chapters before us God appears to Solomon in a dream saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon asks for wisdom to govern Israel. His unselfish request so pleases God that He promises him much more than he asked for. In addition to wisdom, He gives him riches and honor. Solomon's decision in the cases of two mothers claiming one child demonstrates that God had truly given him a wise and understanding heart.

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days [[1Kings 3:1-2](#)].

One of the first things Solomon did after he became king was to marry a daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. His marriage formed an alliance with Egypt. Solomon's marriages with heathen women were terrible mistakes and finally became his undoing. Remember that Solomon was brought up in a court of women. He was not acquainted with life as was David, his father. I do not believe that Solomon ever had the spiritual capacity for God that David had nor the longing for God in his life. Solomon did, however, recognize his shortcomings. After he married Pharaoh's daughter (and we only wish he had done this before), he went to the Lord and asked for wisdom.

After David's reign there was a period of relaxation. The people began to offer sacrifices in high places which was actually heathen, pagan worship. It was a return to idolatry.

### Solomon's Sacrifice And Prayer For Wisdom (3:3-9)

And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar [[1Kings 3:3-4](#)].

Solomon was perfectly willing to offer sacrifices on heathen altars -- something that David never would have done. Although Solomon loved the Lord, he was not the kind of a man David was. Solomon was walking in the statutes of David, but he had that little flaw that we have already seen makes second-rate material.

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee [[1Kings 3:5](#)].

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night. Again, I must repeat that God today is not appearing to men in dreams. If you have had a dream, do not try to say that the Lord appeared to you. Just remember what you had for supper, and you will find out why you had the dream. God speaks to us today in His Word. Solomon did not have all of God's Word in his day, so God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask what you will. I will grant it to you." What is Solomon going to ask for? He has the choice of asking for anything he wants. The fact that he is going to make a wise choice indicates that he had a certain amount of human wisdom before God gave him His wisdom.

When the Lord told Solomon He would grant any wish, I think He recognized that Solomon had many deficiencies and was wholly and totally inadequate. But, my friend, who is adequate for these things? Who is adequate for living the Christian life? Not one of us. The fact of the matter is that we cannot live the Christian life, and God has never asked us to live it. He has asked that He might live that life through us. Now He is

wanting to do something through Solomon. This king could have asked for riches or power. Instead, recognizing his deficiency, notice what he asks for.

And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day [[1Kings 3:6](#)].

Solomon realized that he was attempting to fill not the shoes but the throne of David. He recognized that he was totally inadequate for the job.

And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude [[1Kings 3:7-8](#)].

He considered himself "a little child" in experience. He felt incapable of governing this great nation. There are so many folk today attempting to serve God who do not seem to recognize their inadequacies. All of us are wholly inadequate to serve God. We should recognize that fact so that we are in a position where God can help us.

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? [[1Kings 3:9](#)].

Solomon asked for an understanding heart to judge God's people. I want to consider this for just a moment. We always say that Solomon prayed for wisdom. That is certainly true, but what kind of wisdom did he pray for? He prayed for political wisdom. He wanted the ability to be a statesman. He wanted to know how to judge and rule over these people and make great national decisions. He did not pray for spiritual discernment. This is something that needs to be made very clear. In the books Solomon wrote, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, we will find wisdom that will guide us in this world -- Proverbs is a fine book to give to young men starting out on their own. Although in the Song of Solomon he does reveal spiritual discernment, in his old age his heathen wives turned away his heart from the Lord. Solomon did not pray for spiritual discernment. Solomon prayed for political wisdom, and this God gave him throughout his life.

### Solomon's Prayer Is Answered (3:10-28)

And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment [[1Kings 3:10-11](#)].

Solomon wanted to make wise decisions. In the sickening scene in every government today we see a group of men clamoring for positions. They want to be elected to an

office. All of them are telling us how great they are and what marvelous abilities they have. They assure us that they are able to solve the problems. By now, friend, some of us have come to the conclusion that these boys are just kidding us. They don't have the solution and they don't have the wisdom. If only some men would come on the scene and say, "I don't have the wisdom; I recognize my inadequacies. But I am going to depend on God to lead and guide me." Something like that would be so startling it would probably rock the world. That is what Solomon said, and God commended him for it. It was a great step.

Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee  
[\[1Kings 3:12\]](#).

Solomon does stand out as being a wise ruler. When you read the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, you will find human wisdom on the highest plane. I do not mean that these books are not inspired of God. It is obvious that God through Solomon is giving the highest of human wisdom, making it clear in both books that mere human wisdom is totally inadequate to meet the issues of life.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days  
[\[1Kings 3:13-14\]](#).

The standard, as we have indicated before, is David. That is a human standard and is not very high. But, frankly, few of the kings even came up to that standard.

And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants  
[\[1Kings 3:15\]](#).

The burnt offerings and peace offerings point to the Lord Jesus Christ. The burnt offering speaks of who He is. The peace offering speaks of the fact that He made peace by shedding His blood on the cross. Because of who He is, He is able to bring us into a right relationship with God. The shedding of His blood makes it possible to remove the guilt of our sins.

In the last part of this chapter we have a demonstration of Solomon's wisdom. He gives a clever solution to a real problem. There were two women. They were harlots, and they had one child between them. Each woman claimed the child as her own. They brought the matter to Solomon. How would you solve the problem? How would you find out who the real mother was? I suppose today some scientific method of determining the mother would be pursued, but Solomon had no such recourse. Solomon said to the women, "Since both of you claim the child, we will cut the baby in half, and each of you may have half of the child." The one who was not the mother, who had no love for the child and apparently had it in for the real mother, replied, "Sure, go ahead and cut the child in

half." The real mother, however, said, "Oh, no, no. Don't do that. Give her the child." Solomon knew that the woman who was willing to give up the child in order to save its life was the real mother.

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment [[1Kings 3:28](#)].

This is only one example of the many wise decisions Solomon was able to make during his reign.

## Chapter 4

### Solomon's Eleven Princes (4:1-6)

In chapter 4 Solomon brings the kingdom to its zenith. The things that marked his kingdom were peace and prosperity. Peace is what we would like to have, is it not? I think we could call Solomon the prince of peace while David was a man of war. But the peace that Solomon and those in his kingdom enjoyed was made possible by David, the man of war.

This has a spiritual application for us. We like to feel that God forgives sin because He is sentimental. God does not forgive sin on a low plane like that. A battle has been fought, my friend, and a great sacrifice has been made. Blood has been shed that we might have forgiveness of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ made peace by the blood of His cross. It is only through His blood that we can enter into peace.

So king Solomon was king over all Israel.

And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest,

Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:

And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers; and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:

And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute [[1Kings 4:1-6](#)].

In the first few verses of this chapter a list of Solomon's princes is given. Some of them apparently were the sons of the sons of David, which would mean that they were Solomon's nephews. Azariah is mentioned in [verse 5](#). This man was either a son of Nathan, David's son, or a son of Nathan, the prophet.

### Solomon's Twelve Officers (4:7)

And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision [[1Kings 4:7](#)].

Solomon had twelve officers. Each officer came from a tribe of Israel. They were in charge of providing the needs of the king and his household. This was Solomon's method of taxation.

### The Greatness Of The Kingdom (4:20-26)

**Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.**

And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life [[1Kings 4:20-21](#)].

This was a time of great prosperity and peace. The wars were over. There was plenty for everyone. And this, my friend, is just a little adumbration, a little preview, of the kingdom that is coming on this earth -- the millennial kingdom.

**And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon [[1Kings 4:25](#)].**

There are several things we need to note here. This was a time of security and safety, something which we do not have in this world today. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" ([Isa. 57:21](#)). But peace is coming on the earth when the Prince of Peace comes. In Solomon's day every man dwelt under his own vine and fig tree. That tells us that one man was not living in a mansion and another in a hovel. Each man had his vine and fig tree; he was living comfortably on his own property. It was so from Dan to Beer-sheba -- that is, from the northern border to the southern border -- all the days of Solomon.

**And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen [[1Kings 4:26](#)].**

I want to call attention to this verse. The horse was the animal of war, and God had forbidden the multiplication of horses. God gave a specific law that a king was not to multiply horses or wives: "But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way" ([Deut. 17:16](#)). Solomon multiplied both horses and wives. He had stables all over the land of Israel. I visited the ruins of Megiddo; that is, the mound that overlooks the valley of Esdraelon where we believe that the great issue will be finally settled in the last days at the battle, or war, of Armageddon. It is a tremendous view, by the way. But the thing that impressed me was the ruins there of Solomon's stables, stalls, and the troughs where his horses ate. These stables would accommodate at least 450 horses. [2Chronicles 9:25](#) says he had 4,000 stalls for horses! Solomon certainly multiplied horses, contrary to the wisdom of God.

### Solomon's Great Wisdom And Renown (4:29-34)

Now we are told something of the wisdom of Solomon.

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt [[1Kings 4:29-30](#)].

The east is where the wise men came from.

For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about [[1Kings 4:31](#)].

Four outstanding wise men are mentioned in this verse.

And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes [[1Kings 4:32-33](#)].

We are told that Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs. We have only a few hundred recorded in the Bible. His songs were a thousand and five. Believe me, he was a song writer. We have only one of his songs, The Song of Solomon. Solomon was a dendrologist -- "He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." The hyssop is a humble little plant that grows on rocks. Solomon was also a zoologist -- "he spake also of beasts" -- and an ornithologist since he spoke of birds. He was an entomologist: he spoke of creeping things, or insects. He was an ichthyologist: he spoke of fishes. He spoke of these things because he had studied them and was an authority in these particular realms. This, apparently, is the beginning of the sciences. Solomon was interested in these things.

And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom [[1Kings 4:34](#)].

Solomon gained a worldwide reputation for his wisdom, and many came to hear him. We have a few of the proverbs that he wrote recorded in the Book of Proverbs. As I have said before, these proverbs are extremely helpful to any young person entering adult life. There are certain proverbs that can guide a young man in life and business. You see, God is very practical with us. He gets right down to the nitty-gritty, where you and I walk in and out of the marts of trade, where we enter into the courts of the land and into social gatherings. Certain guiding principles of life are given to us in Proverbs. I am not saying that a young man can become a Christian by following the proverbs of Solomon, but he certainly will have a marvelous guide for his life.

## CHAPTERS 5 AND 6

### Chapter 5

## **THEME:** Preparation and construction of the temple

In chapter 5 Solomon works out a business deal with King Hiram of Tyre for cedar and workmen. Also out of Israel he raises a levy of thirty thousand workmen.

Chapter 6 details the construction of this costly and ornate temple which took seven years to complete.

And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David [[1Kings 5:1](#)].

Whatever King Hiram of Tyre is going to do will not be because of Solomon but because of his love, esteem, and respect for King David.

And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent [[1Kings 5:2-4](#)].

Friend, only God can give peace, whether it is world peace or peace in the human heart. God alone can give the rest today that the human heart needs. That is why our Lord, when they rejected Him as king, could send out His personal, private, individual invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" -- that is, burdened with sin -- "and I will give you rest" ([Matt. 11:28](#)). Only Christ can give that kind of rest. Now God had given Solomon rest from warfare. There was peace on every side.

And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name [[1Kings 5:5](#)].

Although the building of the temple all stems from David, he was not permitted to build it because he was a man of war.

Perhaps we should consider some of the background relative to the building of the temple. Man has been a builder from the beginning. In [Genesis 4:17](#) we are told that Cain ". . . builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." The face of the earth is scarred by great mounds that hide the ruins of great cities and splendid buildings of the past. The spade of the archaeologist has penetrated into the depths, and you can judge each civilization by the height of the buildings. There are those who say that the cave men of the Stone Age (if they ever existed) were barbarians and uncivilized. They were not builders but sought refuge in caves. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, and the Romans are all counted as civilized, and it is evidenced in their architecture. Modern man claims a high degree of culture because he has built subdivisions, shopping centers, apartment buildings, and tall office buildings. Today man is building his own cave in which to live and work -- like a gopher. The rest of the time

he crawls on the freeway like a worm. As long as he can push a button and turn a switch, he says he is living. That is modern man.

The first buildings of impressive design were the temples. All pagan peoples had temples. Some temples were crude; others, such as the Parthenon in Greece, were the highest expression of beauty. All of this building stems from the Tower of Babel, which was a monument to man's gargantuan resistance to God. Pagan temples have always been the highest architectural expression, but the pagans who have attended, both civilized and uncivilized, have been on the lowest spiritual level. These temples have been elaborate, large, ornate, rich, and impressive. The temples of the kings on the River Nile, Asshur of Nineveh, Marduk of Babylon, the ziggurats in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, Baal of the Phoenicians, Athena of the Greeks and in Athens the Parthenon, Jupiter of the Romans, the Aztec temples of Mexico -- all of them are manifestations of rebellion against God. ". . . When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations. . . ." What did they do? They built temples, changing ". . . the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things" ([Rom. 1:21, 23](#)). Each made a house for his god to live in. They put their gods in a box like a jack-in-the-box.

The temple Solomon built, however, was never considered in Scripture as a house in which God would live. In the Book of 2 Chronicles at the dedication of the temple, Solomon made it quite clear that God did not dwell in that place. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" ([2Chron. 6:18](#)). If you think that the temple was built as a house in which God would dwell, you have missed the entire point. It was an approach for man to God and an access to God through sacrifices.

Notice now the conception of the temple, then its construction and character. It is rather important.

The building of the temple was first in David's mind, although God would not let him build it. [1Chronicles 28:1-3](#) tells us part of the story: "And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem. Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood." The temple was not a dwelling place for God; it was to be His footstool.

It was in David's heart to build the temple. The pattern for the building was given to David, not Solomon. [1Chronicles 28:19](#) tells us, "All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." In other words, David was given the blueprint of the temple even though God did not permit him to build it. David gave this pattern or blueprint to Solomon. "Take heed now; for the

LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it. Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasures of the dedicated things" ([1Chron. 28:10-12](#)). David also gathered the material: "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance" ([1Chron. 29:2](#)). The conception of the temple, you see, was in the heart of David. Solomon merely executed the construction of it.

Now with all David's accumulation of material at hand, Solomon contracts with Hiram king of Tyre for cedar and fir timber for the actual construction of the edifice.

And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household [[1Kings 5:8-9](#)].

In addition to the workmen from Tyre, Solomon employed a large work force of Israelites.

And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy [[1Kings 5:13-14](#)].

This was a tremendous enterprise. After Solomon had built the temple, he went on to build other things. He had a building project that was too big, and he overtaxed his people.

## **Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 brings us to the actual construction of the temple. You will notice that the temple is twice as large as the tabernacle was. It is more ornate, elaborate, and costly. The simplicity of the tabernacle was lost, and there appears to be a spiritual deterioration, as we shall see.

And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits [[1Kings 6:2](#)].

Although the temple was twice as large as the tabernacle, it may have been smaller than we realize. The tabernacle was 30 x 10 cubits "and the height thereof 30 cubits." The temple was three times higher than the tabernacle, which had been nothing in the world but a tent.

Even though the temple was small, it was like a jewel. Now a diamond is not as big as a straw stack, but it is much more valuable. That was true of the temple Solomon built.

And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.

And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about:

The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building [[1Kings 6:3-7](#)].

Let me say a word about the construction of the temple. As we have seen, it was only twice as large as the tabernacle. It was surrounded on three sides by a three-story building. This was the place where the priests lived during their course of service. In the front there was a portico that was 10 x 20 x 120 cubits -- half as long as a football field. The brazen altar was 20 x 20 x 10 cubits, while the altar of the tabernacle was 5 x 5 x 3 cubits. There were ten lampstands to replace the one of the tabernacle. There were ten tables of showbread rather than one. There was a multiplication of some of the articles of furniture.

There were 30,000 Israelites used in the construction; they were drafted for the work. There were 150,000 extra workers and 3,300 overseers used in the construction of the building. Hiram, king of Tyre, furnished the material and the artifices. The temple was completed in seven years and six months. The temple was made of stone, and the sound of a hammer was not heard during the building. The cost of the building is estimated around five million dollars. It was like a jewel box. There were two pillars in it which were very impressive. Later on we will see what they mean.

I have mentioned these details by way of comparison. The temple was inferior to the tabernacle, not only in innate quality, but in that which the temple characterizes.

First of all, it was complicated. The simplicity of the tabernacle was lost. In the New Testament the temple is bypassed and the tabernacle is used for the typology. Why? Well, the temple had become very complicated. This has an application for us. We are living in

a day when the emphasis is put on methods rather than on the Word of God. The church is filled with new programs and new methods.

When I first began my ministry I pastored in a little white church on a red clay hill in Georgia, surrounded by a cotton patch. We just had a back room that served as Sunday school. We didn't have very good facilities. We did have central heating, however, as a great big old potbellied stove sat right in the middle of the church. I went by that church a short time ago. The city of Atlanta has grown all around it now. The church now has a big Christian education department and all of the latest equipment. I asked a member of the church, one who had been saved during my ministry, "Does anybody ever get saved here today?" He said, "No. Nobody has been saved." May I say to you that there is a girl out on the mission field who was saved when it was a little old simple church. Although it was very simple, people got saved. I don't like all of the methods employed today. I think we need to get back to the Word of God.

The second thing I want you to notice is that Solomon made windows of narrow lights. There had been no windows in the tabernacle. Now Solomon's windows did not let in much light, but they did let in a little. The people no longer depended upon divine light as they had in the tabernacle. They depended on the natural light which came from outside.

The third indication of inferiority is that the cherubim were made of olive wood. They were ten cubits high -- very impressive -- but they were no longer made of solid gold. The fourth thing is that the temple was more ornate and gaudy than the tabernacle, and there was more ceremony and ritual connected with it.

This is the temple that was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The temple put up by Zerubbabel was destroyed in turn and then supplanted by Herod's temple in Christ's day. The temple actually pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. In [John 2:19](#) Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He wasn't talking about Herod's temple; He was talking about His body: "Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body" ([John 2:20-21](#)). The temple is equated with the body of Christ.

Because this chapter is largely a record of building detail, I have not quoted much of it. However, you will find it very interesting to read. As you read of the magnificence of the temple, keep in mind that it was conceived in the mind and heart of David, as he wanted a suitable place to house the ark of the covenant. (He had no idea, of course, of building a dwelling place for God; he said it was only a footstool for Him.) Its purpose was to provide access to God by sacrifice. Also notice how complicated it is in comparison to the tabernacle. After I had written a book on the tabernacle, I was going to follow it with a book on the temple. After a great deal of study, I threw up my hands in despair. It is much too complicated to illustrate or set before us the wonderful person of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, God honored it with His presence, and the place was filled with the Shekinah glory, as we shall see in the following chapter.

## Chapter 7

**THEME:** Solomon's building projects

In chapter 7 we learn that not only did Solomon build the temple, but he built his own palace, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and a palace for the daughter of Pharaoh. Also in this chapter we have details concerning the construction of the porch of the temple, the molten sea for the temple, the ten lavers of brass, and the ten golden lampstands for the temple.

But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house [[1Kings 7:1](#)].

It took seven years to build the temple, but it took almost twice that long to build his own house. It must have been a very elaborate palace.

He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars [[1Kings 7:2](#)].

Solomon also built the house of the forest of Lebanon. That was his lodge, his second house. Perhaps that is where he went on vacation. We are told that the "length thereof was an hundred cubits," which is half the length of a football field. The breadth was fifty cubits, which is seventy-five feet. The height of it was thirty cubits; that is forty-five feet. It was built "upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars." Hiram, king of Tyre, furnished the stone and the cedars, which were the cedars of Lebanon. There are very few of those tall, graceful cedars left today. All of that country, including Palestine, has been denuded. Apparently at one time it was heavily timbered.

And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch [[1Kings 7:8](#)].

"Of the like work" indicates it was also very ornate and elaborate. He built a house for Pharaoh's daughter -- he seems to have put her in a favored position. He could not build each wife such a palace. If he had, he would have built a thousand palaces! That would have been a staggering building program, like a government housing development.

### **Hiram, The Artisan (7:13-51)**

And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work [[1Kings 7:13-14](#)].

This man is Hiram, the artisan, and not Hiram, the king. He was a skilled worker in brass. He was the one who made all of the delicate pieces of statuary and the items that were made out of iron, brass, and gold. His work was highly ornamented, which is what Solomon wanted. Elaborate ornamentation is evidence of the affluent period and time of peace in which he lived. It is during an era of peace and prosperity that the arts develop. During Solomon's reign there was peace and plenty.

Now we are given more detail relative to the temple.

And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz [[1Kings 7:21](#)].

Jachin means "God shall establish," Boaz means "in it is strength." You will find that there are psalms which include these two concepts of strength and beauty. For example, [Psalm 96:6](#) says, "Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." Strength speaks of salvation -- God is able to deliver those who are His. Beauty speaks of the beauty of worship. We are to worship God in the beauty of holiness. These two pillars were prominent in the temple. Spiritually, these two pillars should be in the life of anyone who is going to worship God. If you are going to worship God, you must have experienced the power of God in delivering you from sin. Then you can worship Him in the beauty of holiness. I see nothing wrong in having a beautiful sanctuary; I think it is quite proper. A beautiful sanctuary may be conducive to worship, but it does not always inspire worship and certainly is no substitute for worship. We worship Him in the beauty of holiness. That is, when we come into the presence of God, sense His presence, and realize our inadequacies, then we can see Him in all of His beauty and glory. This was Isaiah's experience when he went into the temple and saw a vision of God seated upon a throne, high, and holy, and lifted up. When Isaiah saw himself in the light of the presence of God, he saw his own uncleanness. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" ([Isa. 6:5](#)). The pillars Jachin and Boaz speak of that which worship really is -- a redeemed soul who comes into the presence of a holy God.

Realizing that I am no authority in the realm of music, I still insist that music which does not lift you into the presence of God is not music for the church. There is a great deal of music in the church which definitely does not prepare anyone for worship. I have discovered in my ministry and conference work that many times a musical number given by the choir or a soloist before the message is absolutely devastating and destructive to the giving out of the Word of God. We need to recognize that the worship of God is based on the fact that He is high, holy, and lifted up.

Solomon also greatly enlarged the laver in the temple.

And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about [[1Kings 7:23](#)].

This huge laver was supported on twelve oxen cast in brass, three oxen looking in each direction. The brim of it was ornate with lilies. The laver was for the priests to wash in. While there was only one simple laver in the tabernacle, here we have multiplication and beautification in Solomon's temple.

Then made he ten layers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: and every laver was four cubits: and upon every one of the ten bases one laver [[1Kings 7:38](#)].

The purpose of these ten lavers was to cleanse such things as they offered for the burnt offering.

It takes more than size and beauty to bring cleansing to the heart. There are many churches today that conduct beautiful services, yet they do not cleanse the congregation nor bring them into the presence of God. They do not refresh the soul nor bring peace and joy to the heart. All the lavers in the world cannot cleanse one from sin. It is the water in the laver that cleanses. The water represents the Word of God. To wash in the Word of God is to apply the Word to the life.

And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was.

And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold [[1Kings 7:48-49](#)].

In the tabernacle there was one lampstand which spoke of Christ. In the temple there were ten. Again there is multiplication that has an application for us. In our contemporary society there is danger in becoming overly familiar with the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, the other day I listened to a message given on the radio in which the speaker mentioned the name of Jesus over fifty times before he was halfway through his message. To keep mentioning His name over and over is like multiplying lampstands. Also I heard a man say the other day that he was going to come into the presence of Jesus and sit down and talk with Him. Maybe he will; I don't know. But the Bible does not suggest such familiarity with the glorified Christ. A man who was very familiar with Him when He was here on earth -- who rebuked Him and made suggestions to Him, and reclined on His bosom in the upper room -- was John. He was very familiar with Him in the days of His flesh. But John writes of his reaction when he sees the glorified Christ in these terms: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead . . ." ([Rev. 1:17](#)). I think that is where you and I are going to be when we come into Christ's presence. My friend, let's not keep multiplying lampstands, becoming overly familiar with Him. He is the One whom we worship and adore. He is the One before whom we fall down upon our faces.

So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD [[1Kings 7:51](#)].

## Chapter 8

**THEME:** Dedication of the finished temple

In the chapter before us the ark of the covenant is brought into the completed temple, the Shekinah glory fills the house of the Lord, and Solomon gives his message and prayer of dedication.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the

covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion  
[[1Kings 8:1](#)].

When the ark is brought from the tabernacle and installed in the place prepared for it in the holy of holies, the glory of the Lord fills the temple.

And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD.

So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD  
[[1Kings 8:10-11](#)].

In Solomon's message of dedication he gives proper credit to David.

And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.

Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel [[1Kings 8:17-20](#)].

The desire for a permanent structure to house the ark of God originated in the heart of David, as we have seen in [2Samuel 7](#). Solomon merely executed David's plans. I think it should be called David's temple rather than Solomon's temple.

In Solomon's prayer of dedication he says that this temple is to be a place for the name of God, and a place where God's people are to approach Him. It is not a pagan temple in which there is an idol -- nor in which God lives. Solomon understands that the temple is, as David had said, the footstool of God.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? [[1Kings 8:27](#)].

It was merely a place for man to come and bow before Him and offer his sacrifices before Him. It served as an approach to God. It is a pagan notion to think that God can dwell in a house down here. Solomon said, "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." God is omnipresent -- He is everywhere. He is also transcendent, above His creation.

Now here is a section that is quite interesting. It looks forward to the day when Israel would sin against God and be sent into captivity.

If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that

they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near [[1Kings 8:46](#)].

This, by the way, is God's estimate of you and me -- "there is no man that sinneth not." Don't tell me that you don't sin. God says you do.

Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness.

And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name [[1Kings 8:47-48](#)].

This is what they are to do when their temple is destroyed and they are captives in a strange land. This is exactly what Daniel will do over in Babylon. He will open his window toward Jerusalem and pray toward that temple, confessing the sins of his people and his own sins.

Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause.

And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them [[1Kings 8:49-50](#)].

As we shall see, God will answer this prayer.

And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven [[1Kings 8:54](#)].

There has always been a question about the proper posture of prayer. Should you stand, kneel, get down on all fours, or prostrate yourself before the Lord on the ground? Solomon knelt when he prayed. Although no particular posture is essential -- you can pray in most any position -- this is where the posture of kneeling is mentioned. I think it was Victor Hugo who said that the soul is on its knees many times regardless of the posture of the body. It is the posture of the heart that is important.

And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive the

burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days [[1Kings 8:63-65](#)].

Obviously, the altars in the temple could not accommodate all the animal sacrifices mentioned in this passage. Therefore temporary altars were erected to handle the large number of animals which were sacrificed at this time. I think that these altars reached all the way up north to Hamath and all the way south to the river of Egypt. After the animals were offered, they were taken off the altars and divided among the people. It was a time of great celebration and picnicking, you might say.

On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people [[1Kings 8:66](#)].

## CHAPTERS 9 AND 10

### **Chapter 9**

**THEME:** The fame of Solomon; the visit of the queen of Sheba

God appears to Solomon a second time to encourage him, and He sets up David as a standard of measurement for him. The remainder of these two chapters gives proof of Solomon's greatness and of the prosperity of his reign.

#### God Appears To Solomon A Second Time (9:1-9)

And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do,

That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.

And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually [[1Kings 9:1-3](#)].

God is saying to Solomon, "I will meet with you here at the temple. This is the place for you to come, for the people to come, and for the world to come. This is the meeting place."

And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments [[1Kings 9:4](#)].

Now God charges Solomon, "And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked . . . then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever." David is a human standard, not a high standard according to God's standards. David had a tremendous capacity for God. He loved God but he failed, fumbled, faltered, and fell. But he got up and came to God in confession. He wanted to have fellowship with God. God told Solomon that He wanted him to walk before Him as David his father had done -- in integrity of heart.

Integrity of heart is important for us today because there is so much subterfuge and hypocrisy in Christian circles. I spoke at a church banquet some time ago where there were over one thousand people present. One of the politicians of that area got up and said a few words. You would have thought he was the most pious fellow in that crowd. But he managed to leave before the message. Do you know why? He did not want to hear it. He was not interested in God's Word. There is so much of that kind of hypocrisy today. One sees dishonesty and hypocrisy revealed on Sunday morning. Here comes a man out of the business world. He has been careless in his life; he has not been a good example in his home. Yet he walks into church with a Bible under his arm and talks about God and God's will, using all sorts of pious expressions. Whom is he attempting to fool? Does he think he is fooling God?

My friend, we don't fool God. We might as well tell Him the facts because He already knows them. David walked before God in integrity of heart. When he sinned, he confessed it and asked for cleansing. Although his faith failed for a moment, beneath the faith that failed was a faith that never failed. Imperfect though he was, God set him up as a standard: "walk before me, as David thy father walked."

Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel [[1Kings 9:5](#)].

As long as Israel had a king, he was in the line of David. And there is One today in David's line whose nail-pierced hands hold the scepter of this universe.

But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them:

Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people [[1Kings 9:6-7](#)].

The Jews are certainly a proverb and a byword today. This has come to pass literally.

And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?

And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have

taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil [[1Kings 9:8-9](#)].

This also has come to pass literally. If you go to the spot where the temple once stood, you will see that it has been destroyed. The Mosque of Omar now stands there. Why is the land of Israel like it is? Why is the Mosque of Omar there? Israel forsook God, friend. That is the answer.

### Solomon's Fame (9:10-28)

Next we are told that Solomon and Hiram had a little difficulty.

And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,

(Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not [[1Kings 9:10-12](#)].

When Hiram saw the twenty cities, he felt that he had not been given full payment for all that he had done for Solomon in the building of the temple. Actually there was a misunderstanding, and this is the thing that caused a breach between these two men.

And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.

And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold [[1Kings 9:13-14](#)].

This last sentence should read "Hiram had sent . . ." -- explaining that the cities were in payment for the gold he had furnished (the timber, stone, and labor had been paid for in corn, wine, and oil).

And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether,

And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,

And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion [[1Kings 9:15,17-19](#)].

This passage describes the extension of Solomon's kingdom and his tremendous building program.

And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom.

And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon [[1Kings 9:26-28](#)].

Solomon just about cornered the gold market in that day. He also had quite a navy. Ezion-geber was situated on the eastern arm of the Red Sea. This was Solomon's seaport. It was situated near Israeli Eilat. It is thought that his navy extended its navigation as far away as Ophir in southwestern Arabia.

## Chapter 10

### Solomon Is Visited By The Queen Of Sheba (10:1-29)

The visit of the queen of Sheba reveals that Solomon had succeeded in witnessing for God to the world of that day. Solomon's fame had spread, and obviously multitudes were coming to Jerusalem to worship the living and true God. In the present dispensation, the church is to go to the world, but the commission to go into all the world was not given to the nation Israel. As Israel was true to God, she was a witness to the world, and the world came to Jerusalem to worship.

In chapter 10 we have a great illustration of the influence of Solomon in that day. The visit of this queen shows the effect of the reign of Solomon, as God's representative, upon the nations of the world.

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions [[1Kings 10:1](#)].

The queen of Sheba came to Solomon because of what she had heard. She had heard of a temple where man could approach God -- she wanted to know about that. She had heard of Solomon's wisdom; so she came to test him with difficult questions.

And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her [[1Kings 10:2-5](#)].

Now the phrase, "and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD," should be translated, "and his burnt offering by which he went up unto the house of the LORD." She witnesses that Solomon approached God by a burnt offering. This is the

offering that speaks more fully of Christ and His substitutionary death than all the others. [Hebrews 9:22](#) says, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." The burnt offering was a testimony to the queen of Sheba.

She was also impressed with the wisdom of Solomon and with his building program: the palace, the temple and the other buildings. All around were bounty, luxury, and temporal prosperity. For a brief moment in time, God's people were faithful and true witnesses of Him.

And so the queen responds to all that she has seen and heard:

And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard [[1Kings 10:6-7](#)].

She had not believed half of what she had been told and came to find that the half had not been told her. And I don't think the half has been told today concerning our Lord.

Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice [[1Kings 10:8-9](#)].

This now is her testimony, and I think it reveals that she has come to know the living and true God.

And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon [[1Kings 10:10](#)].

She brought a great amount of wealth and gave it to Solomon.

And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day [[1Kings 10:11-12](#)].

Hiram was king of Tyre -- of the Phoenicians who were a seagoing people. We see here that Solomon continued his building program. He made pillars for the house of the Lord and for the king's house, also harps and psalteries for singers.

And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his

royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants [[1Kings 10:13](#)].

The story of the queen of Sheba is one example of the many who came to know God at this time. Similarly, the Book of Acts records only certain conversations such as those of the Ethiopian eunuch, Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius. Yet we know that literally thousands came to know Christ during that period. And there were thousands who came to know God through the temple in Jerusalem and the witness of the people of Solomon's day.

Now we are told something of the gold that came to Solomon:

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target [[1Kings 10:14-16](#)].

I cannot comprehend it when it says there were six hundred threescore and six talents of gold that came to him every year -- he simply cornered the gold market. The kingdom had reached its zenith. Actually, David brought it to this position, but now Solomon is the one who is able to move in and enjoy the peace, the plenty, and the prosperity.

For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks [[1Kings 10:22](#)].

All of these are luxury items: apes for entertainment (these were Solomon's zoo); peacocks for beauty; and gold, silver, and ivory for magnificent decorations. There is a frivolous and tragic note here which is symptomatic of the condition of Solomon's kingdom. He is called to give a witness to the world -- the world is coming to his door -- and what does he do? He spends his time and energy with apes and peacocks simply to satisfy a whim.

So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart [[1Kings 10:23-24](#)].

It was during this period that the kingdom reached its zenith and was characterized by very faithful witnessing. We have seen that illustrated in the life of the queen of Sheba, and now we are told that many others came to Jerusalem also. There was a real witness given to the world by Solomon -- a witness for God.

And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year [[1Kings 10:25](#)].

Frankly, the presents from these visitors enabled Solomon to build up a kingdom that was noted for its riches. Later, of course, that made Israel the subject of spoil by other nations when the kingdom was divided and weakened.

And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem [[1Kings 10:26](#)].

Solomon, as he gathered horses and horsemen, expanded in a department in which God had forbidden him to expand. Solomon's stables would make these modern race tracks look like a tenant farmer's barn in Georgia.

And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.

And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means [[1Kings 10:27-29](#)].

Solomon really built up tremendous wealth in the kingdom. At that time he actually cornered the market on gold, silver, and precious stones.

My friend, what are you busy doing today? Are you getting out the Word of God or are you in the business of gathering a bunch of apes? Do you pay more for entertainment than you do for the Word of God? How about the peacocks for beauty? More money is spent today on beauty preparations than is given to the Lord's work. What about gold, silver, and precious stones? Are you so busy making money that you have no time left for the Lord? Oh, my friend, we are called to witness to the world. God have mercy on us for going into the business of apes and peacocks. How frivolous!

## Chapter 11

**THEME:** The shame and death of Solomon

Solomon is the most colossal failure in the pages of Scripture. ". . . For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required . . ." ([Luke 12:48](#)). He had the greatest opportunity of any man who ever lived. He began by failing to remove false religion ([1Kings 3:3](#)). What was at first only a spot became a plague of leprosy. He had a harem of one thousand wives, pagan women, who turned his heart away from the Lord. For this reason God stirred up enemies against Solomon and allowed Jeroboam to rise to prominence and finally split the kingdom.

### **Solomon Forsakes God (11:1-13)**

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites [1Kings 11:1].

As far as women were concerned, Solomon was patterning his life after his father David. It is too bad he did not pattern his life after other areas of David's life, but he did not. Remember that Solomon had been brought up in the king's palace. He was sort of an effeminate fellow, unaccustomed to the rough and rugged life that David had known. Solomon began to gather women, just as someone else might have a hobby of gathering antique automobiles. He collected women of all nationalities.

Now these women turned the head of Solomon, causing him to go into idolatry and to permit it in the land. He violated God's prescribed law at this particular point.

Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love [1Kings 11:2].

I think this is the one place in Scripture where the word love can be changed to sex. That was Solomon's motive. He had been raised in the women's palace and had never known anything rough or manly. When he became an adult, Solomon spent his time gathering women. He was accustomed to their company. He was a dandy. He was like many men we have in our society today. God is going to deal with him in this connection. The Lord did not approve of what Solomon did, for the Scripture says:

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen [1Kings 11:9-13].

"The LORD was angry with Solomon." Let's be fair with the Word of God. There are those who say, "Oh, look, God permitted Solomon to have a thousand wives." The record gives us the number accurately; that is history. But God's attitude toward it is also revealed: "the LORD was angry with Solomon."

The Lord said that he would not rend away all of the kingdom from Solomon. One tribe would be left for Solomon's son. That one tribe, I would say, was Benjamin. Solomon

was a member of the tribe of Judah; naturally that tribe would also stand with him. So Benjamin and Judah were in the division that will go with the family of David. The other ten tribes in the north will follow Jeroboam.

### **Solomon Is Chastened (11:14-40)**

Now we come to the time at the end of Solomon's reign. God begins to stir up trouble for this man. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" ([Isa. 57:21](#)). Solomon had enjoyed peace. Now for the first time during his reign there was to be warfare.

And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom [[1Kings 11:14](#)].

Next we are introduced to Jeroboam.

And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king.

And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph [[1Kings 11:26-28](#)].

Although Jeroboam was the son of a servant, Solomon recognized that he was a young man of considerable ability and talent. Solomon, therefore, elevated him to a high position and made him overseer of his public works.

And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:

And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:

And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

(But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) [[1Kings 11:29-32](#)].

Ahijah the prophet took Jeroboam's new garment and tore it into twelve pieces. He gave ten pieces to Jeroboam and said to him, "God is going to give you ten tribes. The kingdom is going to be divided."

Why would God divide Israel into two kingdoms?

Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the

Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father [[1Kings 11:33](#)].

The prophet continues with his message. For David's sake, God will not take the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, but He will take it out of the hand of Solomon's son and give ten tribes to Jeroboam.

After these things, Jeroboam is forced to flee for his life.

Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon [[1Kings 11:40](#)].

### **Solomon's Death (11:41-43)**

And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.

And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead [[1Kings 11:41-43](#)].

We will see more of the acts of Solomon and his wisdom in 1 and 2 Chronicles. He was a colorful ruler in the sense that he accumulated so much of this world's goods. Everything in the kingdom denoted wealth, affluence, and prosperity. In the New Testament our Lord refers to the glory that was Solomon's. There was indeed an earthly glory in his kingdom.

## **CHAPTERS 12--14**

### **Chapter 12**

**THEME:** Division of the kingdom under Rehoboam and Jeroboam

In chapter 12 Rehoboam, son of Solomon, succeeds to the throne. Jeroboam returns from Egypt and leads ten tribes in demanding a reduction in taxes. Rehoboam, under the influence of the young men of his kingdom, having rejected the counsel of the old men who were Solomon's advisors, turns down the request of the ten northern tribes. Instead of reducing taxes, he threatens to raise them. Therefore, Jeroboam leads the ten tribes in revolt.

Jeroboam divides the nation religiously as well as politically by setting up a golden calf in Bethel and one in the tribe of Dan. The northern tribes go into idolatry.

### **Rehoboam's Accession And Foolishness (12:1-15)**

Solomon dies, and his son Rehoboam comes to the throne.

And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt:)

That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed [[1Kings 12:1-5](#)].

Solomon had carried on a tremendous building program at great cost. After his death the people asked for their taxes to be lowered. We hear about the government costing so much today. If you want to know why it costs so much, go to the capital of any state, or go to any county seat or to our capital in Washington, D.C., and you will see why taxes are like they are. Believe me, government is a fat calf. It is really spending money and putting up many buildings. Spending requires increased taxation; this is something that is always going to cause trouble. Our problem today is one of taxation -- our government costs too much. We are seeing the increase in buildings to house more committees and more workers. Before long there will probably be more people working for the government than are working in all other jobs put together. This is the movement today; there was the same problem during the days of Solomon. He kept building and in order to do it, he had to increase the taxes.

Rehoboam was asked by the people to reduce taxes. This young ruler had an opportunity to move in and make himself popular by reducing taxes. If he had done that, the people would have followed him. Where is the man today who has the nerve, after being elected to office, to fire about half of the government workers? If someone would do that and cut down taxes, he would make himself popular. Leaders are afraid to take the first step.

Rehoboam called a meeting of his wise men (only they were very unwise).

And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever [[1Kings 12:6-7](#)].

Rehoboam first turned to the wise men in the kingdom who had counseled Solomon his father. Their advice was good, but Rehoboam did not follow it.

But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions [[1Kings 12:8-11](#)].

Then he asked the young men who had grown up with him what they would advise. They too gave him advice, but it was foolish.

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat [[1Kings 12:12-15](#)].

Rehoboam heeded what the young men told him rather than what the wise older men said. He told the people, "Instead of decreasing the taxes, I intend to increase them. Instead of being less severe with the people, I intend to be more severe."

### Jeroboam Becomes Israel's King And The Kingdom Is Divided (12:16-19)

So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents [[1Kings 12:16](#)].

This is rebellion. This is the splitting up of the kingdom, and it will result, of course, in civil war.

Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem [[1Kings 12:18](#)].

All Israel stoned Adoram. That is the way they got rid of the tax collector. And when Rehoboam heard what had happened, he fled to Jerusalem.

**So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day [[1Kings 12:19](#)].**

Israel rebelled against the house of David until the time 1 Kings was written. It was a rebellion that continued on until they returned from the Babylonian captivity. Rehoboam's unwise decision in not listening to the people enabled Jeroboam to take the ten northern tribes and build a northern kingdom.

### **Jeroboam's Idolatry (12:25-30)**

**Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.**

**And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:**

**If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.**

**Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.**

**And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.**

**And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan [[1Kings 12:25-30](#)].**

Jeroboam put a golden calf in Bethel and one in Dan. He put them there for the people to worship so that they would not go to Jerusalem to worship in the temple. This marks the division of the kingdom into the northern and southern kingdoms.

We will now follow the account of the divided kingdom and will find that the method used in 1 and 2 Kings is to record some history about Israel and then some history about Judah. The record goes back and forth. We will be looking at both kingdoms as we go along, but the kingdom of Judah will last longer than the kingdom of Israel. Also, almost all of the prophets, except the postcaptivity prophets, prophesied during this period (see Chronological Table of the Kings of the Divided Kingdom, p. 227). The Table shows which kings of Judah and Israel were contemporary -- that is, those who ruled at the same time -- and which prophets prophesied during each reign.

This brings us to the end of [1Kings 12](#). Rehoboam is the king of the southern kingdom following in the Davidic line. Jeroboam is the king of the northern kingdom. He has introduced idolatry into the north by building two golden calves and placing them in Bethel and Dan so that the people would no longer go to Jerusalem to worship. There is a division -- soon civil war will break out. It will continue until the northern kingdom goes into captivity. And we will find that eventually the southern kingdom will also go into captivity. This is a sad period in the life of the nation of Israel. It contains many lessons for us and for our government.

In chapter 13 we see God's judgment against the false altar of Jeroboam and the strange incident of the man of God who was deceived by a fellow prophet.

The kingdom has now been divided following the rebellion led by Jeroboam who took the ten northern tribes and formed the kingdom of Israel. Rehoboam, a man who certainly did not have the wisdom nor the diplomacy of his father Solomon, was actually responsible for the splitting of the kingdom. The northern kingdom will eventually go into captivity in Assyria and the southern kingdom into Babylon.

There can be a great deal of confusion as we go through this section and read of king after king. You may wonder whether this king belongs to the northern kingdom or the southern kingdom, and whether he is good or bad. The chronological chart of the kings will give you that information. (See page 227.)

When I was a freshman in college, I took a Bible course that was puerile -- it was a weak cup of tea. There were certain questions that were always asked in the class. One of the questions was, "Name the kings of Israel and Judah and briefly describe the reign of each." Well, some freshman in years gone by had made a profound discovery. He found out that if he memorized the names of the kings and wrote after each one -- "a bad King" -- he could make 95% on the test. What freshman would want to make a better mark than that? So that is what all the freshmen did.

You are going to find that in the northern kingdom every king was bad. There wasn't a good one in the lot. There were only eight kings in the southern kingdom -- over a two-hundred year period -- who could be called good. The rest of them were bad kings. This is a dark blot in the history of Israel. Yet, I think you would find a similar record in other lands. If you want to bring all of this down to today, how many good presidents have we had? Party allegiances aside, I believe that history will have to record that we did not do so well either. We have probably had a better percentage of good leaders than Israel, but our batting average hasn't been very good.

The thing that makes Israel's record so bleak is that these people had light from heaven. They had a revelation from God, and their responsibility was greater. But I also feel that the responsibility of our nation is greater than that of other nations because we have, in certain respects, more light from heaven than other nations. Unfortunately our political affairs are a black spot in the life of our nation.

I would like to look back to Solomon for a moment to see why the kingdom was rent. Here is what happened. Solomon was given a special dispensation of wisdom from God to administer the kingdom. Yet that wisdom, apparently, did not enter into his own personal life: Solomon obviously did not have spiritual wisdom or discernment. He did understand certain basic principles and concepts which enabled him to be a very wise ruler, but which did not enter into his personal, private, and certainly not his spiritual life. You begin to see early in his career that he never really broke with false religion. At the beginning, when he came to the throne, there was idolatry, and he closed his eyes to it -- he took no particular, definite, positive stand against it. Then he began to engage in that which was the mark of prosperity. He sent ships out to bring back apes and peacocks. There's nothing particularly wrong with apes and peacocks, but such an obsession is

wrong if you have been called to glorify God -- to witness and live for Him. Solomon had a definite weakness.

The Book of Proverbs reveals the wisdom of Solomon, but the Book of Ecclesiastes reveals his foolishness. You will not find any failure of Solomon's or his father David's in the Book of Chronicles. The two Books of Chronicles cover the same ground as the Books of Kings with one difference: in Kings you have man's viewpoint; you have the history given. Chronicles gives God's viewpoint. God forgave David; and, when God forgave him, He blotted out his sin. Written from God's viewpoint, the sin is not mentioned in Chronicles, but God put it in Kings for men to see. Likewise God forgave Solomon his failure, and his sin is not recorded in Chronicles. In Kings we do see Solomon's weakness -- he began to multiply wives. God never approved of polygamy; His wrath was against it.

The interesting thing is that immorality and false religion always go together. John made it very clear for the Christian when he said, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" ([1John 1:6](#)). Don't kid yourself -- you cannot serve God and have fellowship with Him if you live in sin. You can fool the people around you. Unfortunately, we have Christian leaders today who live in sin. They have been proven immoral, and yet people go ahead and support them -- I have never quite understood why. But they are not fooling God, and they certainly are not having fellowship with Him.

Solomon was a man who was a great failure. There are two men in the Scripture who had tremendous potential and opportunity: one was Samson, and the other one was Solomon. Both of these men failed God in a tragic way. In Ecclesiastes Solomon said, "Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit" ([Eccl. 2:17](#)). The glory of Solomon was a passing glory. Our Lord could say that Solomon in all his glory is not arrayed like that little flower by the side of the road that you passed unnoticed. May I say to you that the wealth and achievements of this world are also a passing glory.

I have given this background of Solomon at this point -- I guess I have more or less preached his funeral service -- because now we are seeing a kingdom divided, and it is divided because of the sin of Solomon.

## **Chapter 13**

### **The Prophecy Against Jeroboam's False Altar (13:1-34)**

We are going to move rather rapidly through this section -- it is history. We will be following the course of the two kingdoms, one following after the other or sometimes together or overlapping.

We find that Jeroboam, who came to the throne in the northern kingdom, was given an opportunity to really serve God. Yet his fear was that the tribes in the north would go back to Jerusalem to worship. That might reunite the kingdom, and he wanted to keep it separate. So Jeroboam set up two golden calves for the people to worship, one in Samaria and one in Bethel.

And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee [[1Kings 13:1-2](#)].

Let me pause here a moment. It is interesting to note when Josiah reigned. It was almost three hundred years later, but the prophet of God marks him out now. He was a good king and he reigned thirty-one years. Josiah led in one of the five great revivals that took place during the period of the kings. We will consider those revivals in Chronicles. These revivals are not mentioned in Kings but in Chronicles, which gives God's viewpoint. Revival is always from God's viewpoint. Man is interested in numbers, but it is impossible for him to determine the real converts. God knows the hearts and knows whether a spiritual movement has taken place or not.

The prophet of God prophesied against the altar, saying that God was going to raise up a man who would destroy such altars. Josiah was the one who would be raised up to accomplish that task.

And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him [[1Kings 13:3-4](#)].

Jeroboam was by the altar when the man of God prophesied. He was making a sacrifice to a golden calf. When the man of God was finished speaking, Jeroboam put out his hand against him. In effect, the king was saying, "Lay hold on him. He is to be slain." When the king pointed to the man of God, his hand dried up; that is, it withered and became paralyzed.

The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward [[1Kings 13:5-7](#)].

The king changes his tune very definitely and begs the man of God to ask the Lord that his arm might be restored. The king's hand is restored to him, and in appreciation he offers to take the man of God home with him and reward him.

And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:

For so it was charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el [[1Kings 13:8-10](#)].

The man of God will not compromise with evil and idolatry. This is quite remarkable.

This is the place to say that there is a lot of double-talk and subterfuge in supposedly fundamentalist Christian circles. I have recently read a statement issued by a certain seminary that claims to be fundamental, and is trying to build a reputation as a conservative school. I have never before read such double-talk in any statement. It claims a super piety and a super intellectualism that is nothing in the world but a denial of the things of God. There is such compromise today in Christian circles! I don't mean that we are to become ugly and cantankerous, or to not speak to certain individuals or have fellowship with them. That is not the point. But what we do need is to have a clear-cut, honest statement of where we stand theologically.

My Christian friend, many believers are supporting organizations that they are not sure are sound. If you don't know whether or not a ministry is giving out the Word of God, you ought to check into it. It is important, and God will hold you responsible for how you invest your money. These are evil days in which we live. They were evil days during the time of Jeroboam, and this prophet was not about to stay and have lunch with the king. He refused to become involved with him.

However, in the next several verses we find that he was deceived by another prophet into disobeying the Lord and suffered the sad consequences. Although he was wary of association with an idolatrous king, he was deceived by a man who claimed to have counter directions from God. My friend, when the church of God today gets involved in the things of the world and makes all kinds of compromises, it is a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God. We are living in days that are much like Jeroboam's, and we need to exercise the same caution and discernment that was needed then by God's man.

You would think that the experience Jeroboam had with the man of God would have changed him. His hand had been withered and healed. Do you think he changed?

After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.

And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from the face of the earth [[1Kings 13:33-34](#)].

Chapter 14 describes the reigns of Jeroboam and Rehoboam and sets the pace for the sordid record of the kings of the divided kingdom. There was not one good king in the northern kingdom of Israel -- all nineteen of them were bad kings. In the southern kingdom there were twenty kings, of which twelve of them were bad. Only eight of them could be labeled good kings. And of the eight, only five were outstanding. (See Chronological Table of the Kings of the Divided Kingdom on p. 227.)

The chapter opens with Jeroboam sending his wife to inquire to Ahijah the prophet because their son is very sick. The Lord's reply through Ahijah is that the child will die, and in addition He gives a further prophecy regarding His judgment on Jeroboam's family.

## **Chapter 14**

### **God's Judgment On Jeroboam (14:7-20)**

Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,

And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes [[1Kings 14:7-8](#)].

David is the standard, you see, for the kings of both the northern and southern kingdoms from now on. Jeroboam fell far short of the man David was, and God will set him aside.

And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead [[1Kings 14:19-20](#)].

### **Judah's Apostasy Under Rehoboam (14:25-31)**

You would think things would be better in the southern kingdom with Rehoboam, but they weren't.

And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house [[1Kings 14:25-27](#)].

Old Rehoboam is now beginning to go down, but he is keeping up a front. When the golden shields are taken by the king of Egypt, he substitutes brass shields.

Next we are told that there was civil war.

And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days  
[[1Kings 14:30](#)].

Finally, we have the death of Rehoboam.

And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead [[1Kings 14:31](#)].

## CHAPTERS 15 AND 16

### Chapter 15

**THEME:** Kings of the divided kingdom

In chapter 15 two of Judah's kings are mentioned: Abijam, a sinful king, and Asa, a good king. Also the reigns of two of Israel's kings are given to us: Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, who walked in the sins of his father, and Baasha, who murdered him and reigned in his stead.

Chapter 16 continues with the history of Baasha, then four other kings of Israel -- each more wicked than his successor: Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab who compounded his wickedness by marrying the infamous Jezebel.

#### Rehoboam Is Succeeded By Abijam (15:1-6)

I feel that we need a double portion of the Spirit of God as we go through this section. In the last part of chapter 14 we were told that Rehoboam, a son of Solomon, reigned over the southern kingdom of Judah and Benjamin. Jeroboam reigned over Israel in the north. He is the one who led a rebellion of the ten northern tribes. Civil war continued between the two kingdoms. It was a bitter war with brother fighting brother -- there is nothing quite as bad as that.

We have also noted that so far none of the kings have been good. In fact, there is never a good king in Israel, and only eight good kings in the southern kingdom of Judah in the line of David.

We find that after the death of Rehoboam, his son Abijam (also called Abijah) comes to the throne:

Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.

Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom [[1Kings 15:1-2](#)].

There is something quite interesting that you will find all through this section: every time a king is mentioned his mother is also mentioned. That is unusual. We are generally told who a man's father was and whom he succeeded, but in this portion the mother's name is given again and again. Why? It is because each mother had a great deal to do with influencing the life of her son. My position here is that the reason God recorded the name of the mother along with each king's name (and these are bad kings) is because she is partially responsible for the way he turned out. Also when the king was a good king, the mother was partially responsible. She must accept responsibility for him.

You and I are living in a time when a lot of condemnation and judgment are brought against young people who become vagrants and are dissolute. I recognize that trouble can arise out of a Christian home, but generally the background of a young person has something to do with the way he or she turns out. Ordinarily these troubled young people have a mother who is partially responsible for the way they act and live -- you cannot escape it, friend. Now I know that this cuts very deep and very hard, but we need to recognize that a mother has had a great opportunity to influence her little one, and if a little one has grown up to feel neglected, unwanted, and unloved, maybe the mother ought to stop and think. Instead of trying to be president of the missionary society, sing in the choir, and do everything else in the church, a mother would be doing more for the Lord if she would stay home some evening, take the little one up in her arms and love him and let him know how much she really appreciates him. This is something that is being neglected in our day. The biggest problem that most young couples have today is finding a baby sitter. May I say to you that we need a few more "mother sitters" who take time to train little Willie and little Susie. My friend, it takes a lot of time and love to rear a child -- this is something that is very important.

I have taken some extra time on this subject because, candidly, it will occur again and again. Every time we have a bad king, his mamma's name is given -- I think God is trying to tell us something. If he was a good king, his mother's name is also given; she will get credit for that. I just would not want to be the mother of some of the rascals we are going to find here in Scripture. It would disturb me a great deal to have a son like most of these kings.

And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done  
before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God,  
as the heart of David his father [[1Kings 15:3](#)].

Abijam walked in all the sins of his father -- he followed his father's pattern. Papa was to blame, also, for the way his son turned out; papa set the example. Abijam was not brought up in a very good home. He was a rotten, corrupt king, and his father and mother are responsible to a certain degree. We are told also that "his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father." David had become the standard for these kings. It is true that David was a human standard, but it was a standard that God accepted.

Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a  
lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish  
Jerusalem [[1Kings 15:4](#)].

The line of David, friend, never ends until you come to the Lord Jesus Christ. It ended there -- you cannot follow the line of David after Christ. God says, "I won't let the lamp go out until the fulfillment of the covenant I made with David." There will come One to sit on his throne who will rule the world -- that One is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite  
[\[1Kings 15:5\]](#).

Why did God accept David as the standard? Because of his sin? No! That was a black spot on David's record. Although little man is in no position to sit in judgment upon God, we do it nonetheless. But if you are going to judge God about His relationship with David, understand what God really said about David. God listed David's assets and liabilities in this verse: David did not turn aside from anything that He commanded except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. That was the black spot on David's record. In every other matter he obeyed God. David did not live in sin. The king of Babylon did. What David did one time, the king of Babylon did every day. It was the weekend practice of the king of Egypt to do the thing David did one time. The whole thought is expressed by our Lord in the parable of the prodigal son. Friend, the son can get in the pigpen -- we need to recognize that. God's child can get in the pigpen, but by the same token the child of God will not stay in the pigpen. Why won't he? The reason is obvious: he is a son of the father; he is not a pig. Pigs live in pigpens. Sons want to live in the father's house. My friend, if you want to live in a pigpen, that is where you belong! And that tells who you are. However, if you are in the pigpen but you have a desire in your heart to cry out to God for forgiveness, He will hear you. When you turn back to Him, He will receive you. David did a wrong thing, but David confessed his sin. However, obedience to God was the norm for David. I think it behooves us to be very careful about criticizing David -- he was a great man. We are not worthy (at least I am not) to tie the strings of his shoes. He was a great man of God and became the earthly standard for the kings.

And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life  
[\[1Kings 15:6\]](#).

This was a time of civil strife. It was a time of brother fighting against brother, and it seriously weakened the kingdom.

### Abijam Is Succeeded By Asa (15:7-12)

Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead  
[\[1Kings 15:7-8\]](#).

Abijam did nothing outstanding during his reign -- all was evil. He was a bad king. So he died and was buried with his fathers.

Abijam was succeeded by his son Asa. Now we come to the first good king, and we feel like saying, "Hallelujah, we've found a good king!"

And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father [[1Kings 15:9-11](#)].

You can see that there is an overlapping here of two years. Asa reigned during the last two years of Jeroboam's reign. Asa reigned for forty-one years. He had one of the longest reigns of any king. In fact, the only two kings who reigned longer than Asa were Azariah (or Uzziah) and Manasseh.

Asa's mother's name was Maachah. Isn't that interesting? Asa was a good king, and she gets credit here for the way Asa turned out. Again David is the standard of right and wrong for a king -- Asa measured up to David.

Now what did he do?

And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made [[1Kings 15:12](#)].

Asa did not go for the idea that we should be soft on homosexuals. He was opposed to homosexuality. It is not a mark of being civilized when any nation drops to the low level that we have today. God gives up any people who have a permissive society, openly allowing homosexuality. It is a mark of gross degradation -- we are going down as a nation. Someone needs to speak out against this today. We need to recognize it as a sin -- it is as corrupt, depraved, and degraded as any sin a person can commit. Man cannot sink any lower than this. When a person sinks this low, God gives him up. Our society is moving in that direction. Asa dealt with the problem, and he is called a good king. God has not changed His mind on this issue at all.

### War With Baasha (15:16-22)

And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days [[1Kings 15:16](#)].

Asa made war against Baasha, king of Israel. It was continual civil war.

We are told that Asa did other things also. He had to appease a kingdom that was arising in the north and becoming dominant -- that kingdom was Syria.

Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me [[1Kings 15:18-19](#)].

Asa sent Ben-hadad presents of gold and silver in order to appease him. To keep him from invading his kingdom, Asa made a league with him. This is probably the one thing he did that was wrong.

Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah: none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah [1Kings 15:22].

Asa did all of this for protection, of course.

#### Asa Is Succeeded By Jehoshaphat (15:23-24)

The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.

And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead [1Kings 15:23-24].

As we shall see, Jehoshaphat was another good king.

#### Nadab Is Slain And Succeeded By Baasha (15:25-27)

Now we come back to Nadab, the son of Jeroboam:

And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin [1Kings 15:25-26].

Nadab began to reign in the second year of the reign of Asa, king of Judah. Nadab ruled for two years over Israel. We will find in this succession of bad kings that there was a great deal of sin and political intrigue in the northern kingdom.

And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon [1Kings 15:27].

You would think that somewhere along the line there would be peace, but there was not. There was war between Asa and Baasha all their days. The continual civil war depleted the energy and resources of both the kingdoms. It also made both kingdoms subject to the powers round about them. They were invaded again and again by Egypt in the south, by Syria, and finally by Assyria in the north. These people simply would not change their ways.

### Chapter 16

#### Baasha's Death, And The Reigns Of Elah And Zimri (16:3-18)

Baasha reigned longer than any other king in the north up to this point. He reigned for twenty-four years. But we are told that this man is to be put down because he did evil. The word of the Lord against Baasha came through Jehu:

Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat [[1Kings 16:3-4](#)].

This was a sad period in the life of the king. Because Baasha chose to share in the sins of the house of Jeroboam, he would also share in the severe penalty, even to the point of being devoured by dogs.

So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years [[1Kings 16:6-8](#)].

Elah had not reigned but two years until Zimri his captain conspired and led a rebellion against him:

And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.

And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead [[1Kings 16:9-10](#)].

When Elah got drunk, Zimri went in and killed him. It seems that because of the conspirators in the northern kingdom no man was really safe. After Zimri killed Elah, he began to reign.

However, Zimri did not last very long either -- only seven days.

In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines [[1Kings 16:15](#)].

Another conspiracy and another rebellion got rid of Zimri.

And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died [[1Kings 16:17-18](#)].

These were dark days for the kingdom, and there are darker days yet to come.

### Tibni And Omri Are Rival Kings Of Israel (16:21-25)

After Omri's conspiracy succeeded in establishing him as king, another problem arose. A rival of Omri's also claimed to be king -- his name was Tibni.

Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned [[1Kings 16:21-22](#)].

Omri put Tibni to death, and then Omri reigned. He ruled for twelve years. He was a bad king and exceeded the other kings in his evil deeds.

But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him [[1Kings 16:25](#)].

### Accession Of Ahab; His Marriage To Jezebel (16:28-34)

So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him [[1Kings 16:28,30](#)].

Omri is succeeded by his son Ahab. Omri had been the most corrupt ruler up to that time, but his son Ahab exceeded him in evil.

And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him [[1Kings 16:31](#)].

Ahab was evil, and he had a wife that helped him with his evil ways. She was a real helpmeet in the area of evil. What Ahab didn't think of, Jezebel did. What she didn't think of nobody else could -- she was a mean woman. The combination of Ahab and Jezebel was the worst possible. You can be sure that Mr. and Mrs. Haman were bad. Herod and Herodias were evil enough. And we know of Ptolemy Dionysius and Cleopatra -- they were quite a couple. Philip I of Spain and Bloody Mary also did pretty well together. These are four of the most infamous couples in history. In particular there were also several couples where the wife was dominant in diabolical designs. For example, there was Catherine de'Medici and Henry II of France; Lucrezia Borgia (she was the daughter of a pope) and Alfonso; Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette of France; and finally, coming down to our day, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. All of these are couples who stand out on the pages of history as being evil, but none can exceed Ahab and Jezebel -- they head the list.

Jezebel was the daughter of a king who was also a priest of Baal and who murdered his brother. It is interesting to note that the name Jezebel means "unmarried" or "without cohabitation." In other words, the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel was not a romance -- it was not a love match. Rather than a true marriage, it was just a wedding. Apparently there had never been a real meeting of these two people in a love relationship. She was a masculine woman with strong intellectual powers and a fierce passion for evil. She was strong-willed and possessed a dominant personality, but she had no moral sense. She was hardened into insensibility. She was unscrupulous and the most wicked person in history -- bar none.

In the Book of Revelation, our Lord gave a message to the church of Thyatira: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" ([Rev. 2:20](#)). Jezebel was a dominating and domineering woman. Christ gave this message to Thyatira because it was a period without natural affection -- it was a picture of Jezebel.

How did Jezebel and Ahab ever get together? I think it was quite easy. For years I went to young people's conferences. It was quite interesting how there could be a boy who was a bad apple and a girl who was a bad egg, and for some strange reason the bad apple and the bad egg always got together and started dating. It always happened that way, and that is the way it was with Ahab and Jezebel.

Something else happened during this period which reveals how ominous and critical those days were:

And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun [[1Kings 16:32-34](#)].

At the time of the destruction of Jericho, Joshua said, ". . . Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho . . ." ([Josh. 6:26](#)). It had not been rebuilt until the time of Ahab and Jezebel, and the curse that was pronounced by Joshua came upon the builder, Hiel.

## Chapter 17

**THEME:** Three years of drought as announced by Elijah

God had to have His man present at the time when Ahab and Jezebel sat on the throne of Israel. It would have to be someone who would have the courage to stand up against

them. God had that man ready. He was Elijah the prophet, one of the greatest men who ever walked across the pages of Scripture. Also he is probably the man who will return to the earth to witness in the last days -- it is predicted that he will return.

### **Elijah Announces The Drought (17:1)**

Elijah is introduced to us in a most dramatic way. He strides into the court of Ahab and Jezebel and makes a very brave announcement.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word [[1Kings 17:1](#)].

Elijah walked into the court of Ahab and Jezebel and gave them the latest weather report. He said it was not going to rain except by his word and he was leaving town -- he had no intention of saying the word. Then he walked out of the court just as dramatically as he had walked in. I think Ahab and Jezebel were taken aback because they never dreamed anyone could speak out so boldly. They will find out that Elijah has a habit of speaking out. You get the impression that Elijah was a rugged individual, and he was. But there's something else that should be said here about him -- God had to train this man. God has always had a method of training the men He uses by taking them to the desert. You will recall that that is where He trained Moses. God took Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and placed him in a land with rugged terrain. God did the same for John the Baptist, and the apostle Paul spent at least two full years out in the Arabian desert. This is God's method of training His men. Now He is going to take out this man Elijah and teach him several things he needs to learn.

### **God Feeds Elijah At Cherith And Zarephath (17:2-14)**

And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan [[1Kings 17:2-3](#)].

God was telling Elijah to get as far out in the country as he could. So he went out into the desert and came to a little stream.

And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there [[1Kings 17:4](#)].

God used two methods of caring for Elijah out in the desert. One was the brook which was a natural means. He was to drink the water. The other was a supernatural means -- the ravens were to come and feed him. Well, Elijah stayed there for awhile, and then the brook began to dry up.

And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land [[1Kings 17:7](#)].

Here is this man out in the wilderness, and he goes to the brook every morning and notices that it is going down a little bit more each day. All he had to do was put a peg in the water to note how much it went down each day. Then he could figure out how many days it would be before he starved to death or died of thirst. Having the mathematical

measurement, anyone with common sense would know that on a certain day the end would come.

This is the sin of statistics. Today the condition of a church is often determined by statistics. If you go to a church meeting and observe that the offering has been good, new members have been received, and there is increased attendance, the church is considered a howling success -- and that may not be the true picture at all.

I once heard the story of a preacher who got up at a church business meeting and said, "We are going to call on the treasurer to give a report so that we can know the status quo of our church." One of the members got up and said, "Mr. Preacher, we don't know what the status quo means." The preacher replied, "The 'status quo' means the mess we are in." Interestingly enough, the true status quo of many churches and other organizations often reveals the mess they are in, although the statistics may look healthy.

Now Elijah could have figured very closely the time he was going to die -- he could have done it mathematically. But, you see, the cold figures of mathematics do not take into account the spiritual fire that is there. You cannot put the condition of the church in the form of a bank statement. You cannot measure it on a computer. Even a revival is not determined by numbers. When Elijah looked at that little brook which was getting smaller and smaller, he learned a spiritual lesson. He saw that his life was a dried-up brook. He was nothing -- he was just a brook, a channel, through which living water could flow. The Lord Jesus Christ says, ". . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" ([John 4:13-14](#)). Sometimes we sing the song, "Make Me A Blessing," and I think that half of the folk don't know the meaning of the words. Why, it means that you are an empty brook and that you do not have any water of life. It is only as the water of life, the Word of God, flows through you that you can be a channel of blessing. Elijah had to learn that ". . . God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" ([1Cor. 1:27](#)). God was telling Elijah, "You are not a big, strong, rugged individual. You are no stronger or better than that dried-up brook. You will have no strength until the water of life flows through you."

It is said of Hudson Taylor that when he prepared young missionaries for service in his mission, he insisted, "Remember that when you come out here you are nothing. It is only what God can and will do through you that will be worth anything." One young missionary replied, "It is hard for me to believe that I am just nothing." And Hudson Taylor said to him, "Take it by faith because it is true -- you are nothing." You and I are just dried-up brooks unless the Word of God is flowing through us.

And then God transferred Elijah:

And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die [[1Kings 17:8-12](#)].

After the widow told her story, Elijah told her to go into her house and make the cake. He assured her that she was not going to die.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel. The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth [[1Kings 17:13-14](#)].

You know, Elijah and that widow stuck their heads down in that empty flour barrel every day and sang the doxology -- and God sustained them out of an empty flour barrel. That barrel was as fertile as the plains of Canada or the corn fields of Iowa. Here is another lesson Elijah needed to learn.

It is a lesson you and I need to learn: we are nothing but empty flour barrels. I hear so much today about consecration -- we are to "give our talents to the Lord." My friend, you and I have nothing to offer God. There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee: what was the most important thing at that wedding? Was it the bride's dress? No! It was that there were some empty water crocks there. The Lord filled them with water, and He was able to serve the guests a delicious refreshment. That was the important thing at the wedding. My friend, we are nothing but empty flour barrels and empty water crocks. We are nothing until the water of life and the bread of life have been put into us. And since we do not recognize this, we are having spiritual floor shows in many of our churches today. They have become religious nightclubs, and there is no more spiritual life in them than there is in a Rose Bowl game in Pasadena, California. There is more enthusiasm and a larger crowd at many activities outside the church than there is at most church meetings. In fact, many church meetings are pretty sad and silly, if you ask me. We need to remember that we are empty flour barrels.

### **The Widow's Son Is Raised By Elijah (17:17-22)**

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him [[1Kings 17:17](#)].

The widow's son died. And what did Elijah do?

And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived [[1Kings 17:19-22](#)].

Elijah made contact with the boy's body three times. This is the great principle of resurrection -- it involves contact with life. Today Christianity needs to be in contact with Jesus Christ. When it is not, it is as dead as a dodo bird. We need to recognize that this is one of the great miracles of Scripture: "and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." You and I are dead bodies. We are lost sinners -- dead in trespasses and sins. If we have trusted Christ, then we can say that we were crucified with Him nineteen hundred years ago; He died, and we died with Him. He was raised, and we were raised with Him. We are joined to the living Christ today -- if we are not joined to Him, we are nothing. The apostle Paul expressed it this way: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" ([Gal. 2:20](#)).

Elijah had to learn that he was a dried-up brook, an empty flour barrel, a dead body. When Elijah recognized this, then God could use him. Martin Luther once said that God creates out of nothing. Until a man recognizes that he is nothing, God can do nothing with him. That is the problem with many of us today: we are too strong, we have too much ability, and God cannot use us.

## Chapter 18

**THEME:** Elijah versus the prophets of Baal

This is one of the most spectacular chapters in the Scriptures. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to a contest to determine who is really God. The prophets of Baal -- all 450 of them -- are about an even match for this one man Elijah. He is a great man!

### **Elijah And Obadiah (18:1-16)**

And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria [[1Kings 18:1-2](#)].

God is ready to use Elijah. This man can now step out with boldness -- he has learned that he is nothing and God is everything. He goes out to meet Ahab, and he is prepared.

And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself [[1Kings 18:3-6](#)].

The famine was now in the acute stage. Much of the vegetation had dried up and the cattle could no longer find places to graze. So Ahab and his servant, Obadiah, set out in search of possible pasture land. Ahab went one direction and Obadiah went another. Now Obadiah was the governor of Ahab's palace. He was a God-fearing man, and he had hidden one hundred prophets of God from Jezebel's wrath.

And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here [[1Kings 18:7-8](#)].

While Obadiah was looking for grazing sites, he met Elijah. Elijah told him to tell the king, "Behold, Elijah is here." My, how we need a voice like Elijah's today. I believe he is coming back in the last days after the church leaves the earth. This earth will need a strong voice then, and it will have one in Elijah.

And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? [[1Kings 18:9-13](#)].

Obadiah does not want to deliver Elijah's message as he is afraid that Elijah will disappear before Ahab sees him. Obadiah is fearful for his own life, and he makes it very clear that he does not want to do what Elijah has asked.

And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him today.

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah [[1Kings 18:14-16](#)].

We have read the message three times now: "Behold, Elijah is here." With Elijah's assurances that he will certainly meet Ahab, Obadiah goes to the king. And you know what this man said? He said, "Behold, Elijah is here." And that will be the message again some day.

### **Elijah's Challenge To Ahab (18:17-19)**

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim [[1Kings 18:17-18](#)].

Elijah said to Ahab, "I am not the one who is troubling Israel -- you are!" Elijah's kind of preaching cannot be misunderstood. It is not double-talk; it is telling is like it is.

Before we go any further, I want to say that the liberal is always blaming the fundamentalist for causing division in the church. But who really caused it? The church held very fundamental beliefs at one time. Who brought bifurcation into the church? Who was it that led the church away from its foundation? The liberal did. I have been accused of leaving my former denomination, but I did not -- my denomination left me. I still have the same beliefs that I had at the beginning. Unfortunately, my denomination has departed from these historic beliefs.

It has always been the custom of the liberal to blame any trouble in the church on the fundamentalist. The liberal is never to blame.

In the same way Ahab blames Elijah for the problem in the land. He accuses Elijah of stirring things up. The Word of God will always stir up things. The interesting thing is that rats will always scurry to a dark corner when the light is turned on.

Then Elijah challenged Ahab to a contest between himself and the prophets of Baal.

Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table [[1Kings 18:19](#)].

The contest was actually one between the Lord and Satan -- between the worship of the living God and the worship of Baal. Outwardly it was a battle of Ahab and Jezebel with the 450 prophets against Elijah. Elijah, however, was worth a whole army.

### **The Lord Versus Baal At Mount Carmel (18:20-40)**

So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word [[1Kings 18:20-21](#)].

The people of Israel have assembled at Carmel. It is going to be quite a contest. Elijah knew what was in the hearts of the people. They were pretending to worship the living and true God, but they were also worshiping Baal. The reason the people did not answer Elijah is that they were guilty of sin. It is that type of double-talk -- a two-faced way of life -- that today has become so abhorrent and is a stench in the nostrils of God. The double standard of many Christians has turned off many people as far as the church is concerned. If the average unsaved man knew the church as I know it today, I have my doubts that he would ever darken the door of a church. If there ever was a place where things should be made clear and plain, simple and forthright, it is in the church. Unfortunately, that is where there is more double-talk and beating around the bush than any place else.

Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men [[1Kings 18:22](#)].

Elijah had what I am pleased to call an Elijah complex -- some of us develop that even today. Many times in my ministry I feel that I am the only one left. Then I find out that there is a preacher in a hollow in Tennessee, or on the side of a hill in Georgia, or down around a lake in Florida, or up in the mountains of California, or in the suburban areas of Chicago who is standing for God and paying a bigger price than I have ever paid. Then I just get rid of my Elijah complex and thank God that there are men standing for God and His Word in these days in which we are living. Now I recognize that there are many big-name preachers that you hear about but who are not actually standing for God. Instead they are pussy-footing around. They are trying to compromise. I heard one preacher give a certain message in one part of the country and then turn around in another part of the country and practically reverse his message. There is something wrong when you can't give the same message everywhere. There is something wrong with the message or with the man who gives it.

Elijah says to the people of Israel, "I am the only one who is standing for God." Now he was wrong -- there were seven thousand people hiding in the hills who had not bowed the knee to Baal. I never cared too much for that crowd, but at least they did not worship Baal. Elijah did not even know about them. If Elijah had been on the radio in those days, he never would have received a letter from any of those folk. It is too bad that they did not encourage him a little bit, but they did not.

Elijah continues his message to the people and his challenge to the prophets of Baal:

Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken [[1Kings 18:23-24](#)].

In other words, Elijah said, "Let us taste of the Lord and see whether He is good or not. If Baal is God, then let us worship him. And if he is not, then let's kick him out. If the Lord God is the living God, we want to know." My friend, today God wants you to know Him. Although you may have doubts, if you're sincere and really want to know Him, He will reveal Himself to you -- because God wants you to know. Faith is not groping in the dark: our faith rests upon facts. Your salvation depends on your believing those facts and trusting Christ.

Notice what is going to take place. I think this is one of the most dramatic scenes in Scripture.

And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened.

And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them [[1Kings 18:25-28](#)].

The prophets of Baal put on quite a performance. Elijah just sits there and watches them at first with a good deal of cynicism. They begin to call upon Baal. Nothing happens. They jump on the altar -- and that doesn't help. They become fanatics. They display a lot of emotion. Their actions become almost hysterical. Finally, they begin to cut themselves, and the blood gushes out. They are sure this will stir Baal to action. Old Elijah says to them, "Say, it may be that he has gone on vacation and you will have to wait until he comes back. Or maybe he is taking his afternoon siesta and you are going to have to yell louder to wake him up." Elijah has a big time during their performance. And all the while the people of Israel are watching.

It is Martin Luther, by the way, who is credited with the statement, "One with God is a majority," and he knew the accuracy of that statement by experience. Elijah also learned

this truth through experience in his day when there had been a wholesale departure of the northern kingdom from God. Under Ahab and Jezebel there was almost total apostasy -- Elijah pretty much stood alone. It is true that there were seven thousand people who had not bowed to Baal, but they had retreated to the mountains. Not one of them stood with Elijah. He was not aware that they even existed until God told him. Elijah took a stand against calf worship. You might say he took a stand against new morality and rock music in the church. He took exception to many of the things that were going on and refused to compromise with the prophets of Baal. When they wrote a new "Confession of Faith" and rejected the authority of the Word of God, he was opposed to them.

It was Dr. Wilfred Funk who said that the most bitter word in the English language is "alone." Elijah stood alone. He did not voice public opinion, friend. He was no echo -- he was no parrot. He was not promoting anyone else. He was no politician. He was more concerned about pleasing God than courting the popularity of the crowd. He sought divine approval rather than public applause. He was not a clown in a public parade. He was a fool for God's sake. He was a solo voice in the wilderness of the world. He carried on an all-out war against Satan and his hosts. He stood alone, arrayed against the prophets of Baal. Elijah chose Mount Carmel to take a dramatic stand for God.

Several years ago I stood in what is probably the exact area where Elijah and the prophets of Baal held their contest. Mount Carmel overlooks the Bay of Haifa and the blue Mediterranean Sea. It is a long ridge; and way out yonder to the east is Megiddo in the valley of Esdraelon. In this dramatic spot the lone, majestic figure of Elijah stood apart. He was detached. I think he looked bored after a few minutes of the performance by Baal's prophets. Then that ironic smile crossed his face and you could hear the acid sarcasm in his voice. He used the rapier of ridicule. He taunted and jeered at these prophets. And finally, with wilting scorn, he waved them aside.

And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down [[1Kings 18:29-30](#)].

Elijah is now going to have to depend on God. The altar of the Lord has been broken, and Elijah spends some time cementing it together. That was a dramatic move, friend.

What is it that has caused division in our country today? I recognize that there are many explanations being offered, but a departure from God is basic to the divisions in this nation. There was a time that there was a measure of unity, and it was a unity based on the fact that there is a living God -- that is written in our constitution -- and we are responsible to Him. There was a time when this nation believed that the Bible was an authority. Who divided this country? Those, my friend, who began to cut up the Word of God. That is what caused the division. It is hypocrisy today when so many are saying, "Let's get together." Get together on what, my friend? You cannot get together on nothing. It is like the story that is told about a man who was walking through the jungle in Africa, and he met an elephant. The elephant said to him, "Where are you going?" The

man replied, "I am not going anywhere." The elephant said, "I'm not going anywhere either. Let's go together." That is the only way you are going to get together with today's crowd: you will have to agree on nothing. If you do that, you can all get together. My friend, you can't get together unless you've got something to gather around that will hold you together.

The altar was the place of unity. Elijah put it back together.

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood [[1Kings 18:31-33](#)].

Notice that Israel was one nation. It was not Israel and Judah, or Samaria and Jerusalem, but all twelve tribes as the one nation, Israel. So Elijah built an altar in the name of the Lord. Then he made a trench around the altar, put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces. Finally he ordered that four barrels be filled with water and poured on the sacrifice and on the wood. Now it was a long way down to the water supply. As I stood on Mount Carmel, I wondered how long it took those who were bringing the water to get four barrels up the side of that mountain. It was a long route, but Elijah was in no hurry.

And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water [[1Kings 18:34-35](#)].

They fetched the water once, and Elijah said, "Go down and fill it again." And that was not enough. He said, "Do it the third time," and they did it the third time. I think if you could have seen Elijah that day there would have been a wry smile on his face. Do you know what that wry smile was about? Why did he pour water on that altar? My friend, only God can do the impossible. A little water won't keep the fire from falling, so he did not mind pouring the water over everything. He could have poured water for the next twenty-four hours, and the fire still would have fallen. Elijah is learning to depend on God -- we have seen that. Remember, as he stood at that little brook and watched it dry up, he knew he was nothing in the world but a channel through which water could flow. He had also looked down in an empty flour barrel and sung the doxology. God fed Elijah, the widow, and her son out of that empty flour barrel for the period of the drought. And then he found out he was a dead body. He had learned that if anything is going to be done, God has to do it. He just stood up there that day, a wry smile on his face -- I think Elijah had a sense of humor. And I know God has a sense of humor. Under his breath Elijah probably said, "Lord, if You don't do it, it won't be done."

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word [[1Kings 18:36](#)].

Friend, I wish we recognized the fact that if God doesn't do it, it's not going to be done. Do you understand Elijah's prayer? This is one of the great prayers of Scripture -- it's not long, but it is great. He said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel . . ." You will notice that Elijah used the term Israel, not Jacob. Why Israel? Well, Israel is the name that was given not to twelve tribes, but to one nation. Also in his prayer Elijah said, "Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word." You and I need to be sure that what we are doing is according to the will of God. Don't do something that you want to do and then ask God to bless it. God doesn't move that way. You have to go His route if you want to receive the blessing. We have no right to demand anything of God. It is true that He demands a great deal of us, but we are not to demand anything of Him. He is not a Western Union boy. He will not come at your command. We are to pray according to His will.

Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again [[1Kings 18:37](#)].

Elijah is praying for the glory of God in this verse. That is what moves the arm of God. And do you know what happened?

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there [[1Kings 18:38-40](#)].

That was a pretty brutal thing to do, wasn't it? But it sure got rid of the apostasy and the heresy.

### **Elijah's Prayer For Rain (18:41-46)**

And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain [[1Kings 18:41](#)].

When the people turned to God, the rain came and the blessings came.

So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.

And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel [[1Kings 18:42-45](#)].

Elijah was a great man! And so that the people might realize that the drought was not just an accident of nature but was a disciplinary measure, it ended the same way that it had begun -- by the command of God's man, Elijah. Elijah said that rain was coming, but at first nothing could be seen but blue water and blue sky. When his servant looked for the seventh time, however, a cloud as small as a man's hand could be seen. The cloud rapidly increased in size until the heavens were black and rain flooded the parched earth.

[And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel \[1Kings 18:46\].](#)

Elijah had told Ahab to hurry home because the creek would soon rise and he would not be able to cross it. But then Elijah began to run. Why? Because he is a man of like passion as we are. He is very much a human being, and we are going to see just how human he is.

## Chapter 19

**THEME:** Elijah under a juniper tree

Ahab reports to Jezebel that Elijah had slain all her prophets of Baal. She vows to kill Elijah. He beats a cowardly retreat to Beer-sheba, where he leaves his servant and continues on into the wilderness to crawl under a juniper tree, where he requests that he might die. Evidently Elijah is suffering from nervous exhaustion. He is physically and mentally depleted. God gives him nourishing food and plenty of sleep. Then He treats him to a spectacular display: strong wind, earthquake, and fire. Elijah loves all of this. Then comes the still, small voice. Although this is contrary to Elijah's personality, God is in the still, small voice. He sends him back to the scene of action and danger. On the way, Elijah calls Elisha to be his successor.

### **Elijah Runs From Jezebel (19:1-7)**

It is difficult to believe that Elijah is the same man who defied 450 prophets of Baal on the top of Mount Carmel. He seems to be a different man, but there is an explanation for his condition.

[And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.](#)

[Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.](#)

And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there [1Kings 19:1-3].

That was a threatening message Jezebel sent to Elijah. Being before the public defying the false worship in his nation had drained a great deal of his energy and strength. He did a strange thing when he heard Jezebel's message threatening to kill him. Like Simon Peter when he took his eyes off the Lord, looked at those waves, and began to sink, Elijah lost his courage. He began to run. He went to Beer-sheba which is way down south. And friend, take it from someone who has been there, it is way down in the desert. Anyone who got as far away as Beer-sheba could consider himself safe from a ruler in the northern kingdom. But Elijah, when he reached this place in the desert, left his servant there and continued on another day's journey.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers [1Kings 19:4].

You must admit that this is quite a change for the man who stood on top of Mount Carmel and defied the prophets of Baal. Now he is hiding under a juniper tree way down at the other end of the land, hiding from a woman, Jezebel. Ahab had not made any effort to arrest him or destroy him, but Jezebel hated Elijah, and she was not going to let him live if she could help it.

I think we need to note that Elijah had gone through a traumatic experience when he stood before that altar, prayed to God, and fire from heaven fell. Then there was the execution of the prophets of Baal. Next there was a tremendous rain storm, which was a great victory for Elijah. When Ahab went back and reported to Jezebel all that had happened, she sent a telegram to Elijah saying, "I want you to know that I intend to get you!" She is the most wicked woman in the Bible. Elijah got his eyes off the Lord and ran to an area that was beyond the farthest outpost of civilization. When he got to Beer-sheba, he just kept going. Finally he felt that he was out of her reach. Frankly, when I see him crawling underneath that juniper tree, I am ashamed of him. I am sure that some very pious Christian would have given Elijah a fine little lecture on how to be cheerful and optimistic and smile in his situation. They would tell him that [Romans 8:28](#) was still in the Bible. May I say to you, I don't think you could have gotten Elijah to smile while he was under that tree.

I heard an English divine who preached a sermon some time ago on the subject, "Brief, Bright, and Brotherly." Elijah did not feel that way underneath that juniper tree. You can criticize Elijah, you can find fault with him, and you can denounce him, and you can say that he is not trusting God as he should. Some might even say he is a disgrace to the Lord. What has happened to our prophet? Is this the man who defied the prophets of Baal? Is this the man who said, "If the LORD be God, follow Him"? What disease has smitten him? What is the diagnosis? Could you give us the etiology of it?

Let me suggest several things. There was a physical cause for the way he acted. He was overworked. He was overwrought. He was overworried. He was physically exhausted. I

think he could have dropped in his tracks after that experience at Mount Carmel. He was worn out after the arduous task of standing for God in the face of such opposition.

The sin of the ministry is not finances, although many people think it is. Unfortunately, there are some preachers who are running a religious racket, but money is not the problem with the average preacher. When I was ordained, I was warned about the three sins of the ministry: pride, being boring, and laziness. I am confident that some folk are never going to get under a juniper tree. Do you know why? They are too lazy. Although there were seven thousand believers who had not bowed a knee to Baal, they were not under the juniper tree. They were hiding in caves up in the hills. They would never have been able to stand the lofty heights of Mount Carmel, and they did not see the fire come down from heaven. Elijah stood alone. He was a prodigal of his own physical strength. Some dear saint, I am sure, whispered in his ear, "You are doing too much. Take it easy." Elijah would never have run away from Jezebel if he had not been exhausted. I think we need men today who are willing to work for God. I hear a lot of talk about folks being dedicated, but they are as lazy and careless in the Lord's work as they possibly can be. This could never be said of Elijah. He was under the juniper tree because he was exhausted.

There is also a psychological factor involved in this situation. This is the day of hypertension, frustration, sterility, frigidity, nervous debilitation, disappointment, discouragement, despondency, let-down, run-down, and breakdown. Perhaps you have misunderstood Elijah. He was rough and rugged. He was a blood-and-thunder man. But that rugged exterior concealed a sensitive soul. He was ruled by his emotions, and he could go from elation to dejection. He possessed the finer sensibilities -- he had artistic taste and aesthetic taste. His nature was emotional, and he did things that were emotional. Perhaps he suffered, as the psychologists say, from manic-depressive psychosis. A woman is probably the most delicate of God's creatures, and a woman is emotional. She has a finer sensibility than a man. Elijah had that kind of a nature. Did you ever notice that God put a badger skin around all of the beauty, wealth, and workmanship of the tabernacle? A badger skin was the exterior of something fine and beautiful. The exterior of Elijah was like that. Now he is crying out for God to take his life. He is in bad shape.

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee [\[1Kings 19:5-7\]](#).

Elijah needed rest. The Lord knew that, so He put him to sleep. Elijah slept like a baby. He also needed some good food -- I don't think he had been eating regularly. He awoke to find some bread being baked. Do you know who I think baked that bread? I believe it was the same One who prepared that breakfast on the shore of Galilee one morning after the Resurrection. It was our Lord who comforted Elijah, fed him, and then put him back to

sleep. He fed him, the second time, and told Elijah, "The journey is too great for you." This was something that Elijah had learned.

My friend, today may be a very happy day for you. You may think that you are sufficient for the battle of life. But I want to tell you that the journey through life is too great for you. You are going to need a Savior. You are going to need a helper. Elijah, as rugged as he was, needed Him.

### **Elijah At Mount Horeb (19:8-18)**

And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God [[1Kings 19:8](#)].

Strengthened by the food provided by God, Elijah continued to run. He went clear to Mount Horeb, the mount on which the Law had been given to Moses.

And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away [[1Kings 19:9-10](#)].

The Lord is dealing with Elijah. He is overwrought and needs real psychological help. I have been asked if I believe in going to a psychologist. I think there are times when a person needs to consult a psychologist. Most of us, however, could solve our problems if we crawled on the couch of the Lord Jesus Christ and told Him everything. We wouldn't have to be running around telling everybody else about our troubles and problems if we would just talk them over with Him. We ought to tell Him everything.

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake [[1Kings 19:11](#)].

First of all there was a great and strong wind that split the mountains and broke the rocks. Oh, did he love a good wind storm! Then the mountain rolled and shook under his feet. He loved it -- he was that type of man.

And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice [[1Kings 19:12](#)].

After the earthquake there was a fire. After all, he was the man who brought fire down from heaven on Mount Carmel. He liked that too. But wait a minute. God was not in the strong wind, nor the earthquake, nor the fire. After the fire came a still, small voice. If there was one thing that Elijah did not like, it was a still, small voice. I am sure Elijah did not have that kind of a voice, but he had to learn that God moves in a quiet way -- how

wonderful it is to see God moving in this way. He was teaching Elijah a great lesson. The battle was not actually won on top of Mount Carmel by fire coming down from heaven. God moves in mysterious and unostentatious ways His wonders to perform. God moves in a quiet way. God uses little things to accomplish His purpose. As someone has said, "Great doors are swung on little hinges." God uses small things to open mighty doors. That is what Elijah had to learn.

And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away [[1Kings 19:13-14](#)].

Many of us can identify with Elijah. Sometimes with our families or in our communities we are surrounded by unbelievers, and we get the feeling that we are the only ones on earth standing for Christ.

And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay [[1Kings 19:15-17](#)].

God is saying to Elijah, "Go back to the north country; I have more work for you to do." He is to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria and Jehu to be king over Israel. Then God tells Elijah about his successor, Elisha.

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him [[1Kings 19:18](#)].

Finally, He told Elijah that there was a remnant of seven thousand people who have not bowed to Baal. God always has a remnant, my friend. He had one in Elijah's day, and He has one today. I have been very unkind in my references to the remnant. But they were standing for God. They had not bowed the knee to Baal. They were not out in the open like Elijah; they were the silent ones, but they were true to the God of Israel.

### **Elisha's Call (19:19-21)**

God now is preparing to take Elijah home, and He will raise up Elisha to take his place.

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him [[1Kings 19:19-21](#)].

Elisha now becomes the pupil of Elijah. He is being trained to take over his ministry, as we shall see.

## Chapter 20

**THEME:** Israel is attacked by Syria

Remember that this event occurs during the time the kingdom of Israel is divided. The ten northern tribes bear the name of Israel. Because of the repeated sin of both king and people, God is permitting their enemies to attack them. However, again God is gracious and gives them opportunity to repent and return to Him. In this chapter God delivers Israel, though pitifully outnumbered, from the mighty army of Syria.

### **Ahab's First Syrian Campaign And His Victory (20:1-21)**

And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it [[1Kings 20:1](#)].

God is now permitting the enemy to come in from the outside. Up to this time God had not permitted it at all. We are told, however, that God promised victory even to Ahab.

And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.

And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou [[1Kings 20:13-14](#)].

The promise of God's deliverance in this situation was not based upon Ahab's fidelity but on God's love for His people. God gave this man an opportunity to change. We hear a great deal today about lost opportunities and about opportunity knocking only once at the door of every man. I think opportunity stands at the door and keeps knocking. Now Ahab was promised a victory, and God gave him a great victory over the Syrians.

And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen.

And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter [[1Kings 20:20-21](#)].

### **Ahab's Second Syrian Campaign And His Rebuke For Sparing Ben-hadad's Life (20:22-42)**

And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee [[1Kings 20:22](#)].

God was telling Ahab, "I have given you a victory now, but you be careful that you don't return to the worship of Baal. I have demonstrated that I am your God -- the living God. The king of Syria is going to come against you again at the return of the year." It was not the end of the struggle; Ben-hadad was going to renew his effort to defeat Israel. This is a very vivid picture.

And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD [[1Kings 20:27-28](#)].

Once again God gave Ahab victory over the enemy, but unfortunately, Ahab made the mistake of sparing Ben-hadad's life.

And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away [[1Kings 20:34](#)].

Ahab was told to eliminate the enemy, but he did not obey. There can be no compromise, friend, with sin. God never permits that, and that is exactly what Ahab had done.

And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people [[1Kings 20:42](#)].

Why is it today that judges are so lenient with criminals? It is because they have a guilt complex themselves, my friend. They feel guilty themselves, and they know they are sinners. It is almost like pointing the finger at themselves to convict someone else. It is

very hard for one sinner to judge another sinner. This was the case with Ahab -- that is why he spared Ben-hadad's life.

## Chapter 21

**THEME:** Ahab and Naboth's vineyard

The chapter before us is a page out of the lives of the wicked king and queen of Israel, Ahab and Jezebel, which reveals their covetous and ruthless characters.

### **Naboth's Vineyard Is Coveted By Ahab (21:1-4)**

And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria [[1Kings 21:1](#)].

A few years ago I was in Samaria, and I must confess that it is one of the most beautiful spots in the land of Palestine. You can stand on the hill of Samaria where Ahab and Jezebel's palace stood (Omri built it), and you can see Jerusalem to the south, the valley of Esdraelon and the Sea of Galilee to the north, the Jordan River on the east, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. It is a beautiful view on all four sides. There are not many places like that. If I were living in that land, that would be the spot where I would like to have my home.

And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee [[1Kings 21:2-3](#)].

Naboth had a vineyard in this area. And as I stood on that beautiful hill, I wondered what side it was on. We do know it was nearby. And with as lovely a palace as Ahab had, you would think he would be satisfied. But, no, he wants that vineyard. Naboth does not want to sell it for the very simple reason that the vineyard is his patrimony. It is what God had given to his ancestors, and it had been passed down from father to son. But now here is a king who wants it, and it takes a pretty brave man to turn him down.

And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread [[1Kings 21:4](#)].

Ahab doesn't get his way, so he goes home and pouts like a little boy. Ahab, wicked as he is, is like a spoiled brat and won't eat now because he cannot have what he wants -- he can't have that vineyard!

### **Jezebel's Murderous Plot To Obtain Naboth's Vineyard (21:5-16)**

Ahab did not have any ideas about how to get Naboth's vineyard, but Jezebel did. I can assure you that she is going to work out something that will enable her husband to get it.

But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite [1Kings 21:5-7].

Jezebel was absolutely masculine in her manner -- she was a dominant and domineering woman. I would have been afraid of her myself, I must confess. She is a wicked woman, and she is going to get the vineyard. She contrives a nice little plot and arranges to have two lawless men witness against Naboth. They say that he blasphemed God and the king. Naboth is then carried out of the city and stoned to death. Can you think of anything more unjust than this? Well, it has happened many times in the history of the world. Many times the man on top who has everything has taken advantage of the little man.

Naboth was stoned to death. Did Ahab get by with it? My friend, you don't get by with sin. I don't care who you are -- the day will come when you are going to have to settle up. And the day came when Ahab had to settle up.

And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it [1Kings 21:15-16].

So Jezebel came in and announced to her husband Ahab, "Naboth is dead, and you can have the vineyard." It looks like Ahab has gotten by with his wickedness, doesn't it? No, God has a man there. Thank God that there is a man around who will declare the Word of God!

### Ahab's And Jezebel's Doom Is Predicted (21:17-23)

And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine [1Kings 21:17-19].

Remember that God has said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" ([Gal. 6:7](#)). If you and I could speak with men from the past -- whether they were God's men or Satan's -- they would tell us that this is an immutable law of God; it cannot be changed.

Jacob found out the truth of this law. Pharaoh of Egypt, who killed the little Hebrew boys, thought he got by with his crime, but one day he found that his firstborn was dead. David committed an awful sin, but he did not get by with it. The same thing he did came back to him. Saul of Tarsus was a leader in the stoning of Stephen, but there came a day in Asia Minor, at Antioch of Pisidia, when he was stoned and left for dead. The fact of the matter is that he was dead, and God raised him from the dead.

Now here is the judgment that is pronounced on Ahab and Jezebel:

Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,

And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin [[1Kings 21:21-22](#)].

God says to Ahab, "I'm removing your house. Your line will not reign here." Now God is not through:

And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel [[1Kings 21:23](#)].

Both of these judgments very definitely come to pass.

## Chapter 22

**THEME:** Ahab and the prophet Micaiah

Now in chapter 22 we will see the fulfillment of the Lord's judgment against Ahab. While we have been following the career of this king of the northern kingdom, down in the south Jehoshaphat has come to the throne. He is a good king, but now he is going to make an alliance with Ahab.

And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel [[1Kings 22:1-2](#)].

What has happened that would cause a good king like Jehoshaphat to make an alliance with a king as wicked as Ahab? Why would he fraternize with his natural enemy? It's an abnormal alliance, an unnatural confederacy. At this point it seems strange, but we will find out later that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. This was a case of the "sons of God marrying the daughters of men"; that is, a boy with a godly heritage married a girl with a very wicked one. And the wicked

influence prevailed. When the believer and the unbeliever get married, my friend, you can always be sure that the believer is going to have trouble. When you marry a child of the Devil, your father-in-law sees to it that you have trouble.

And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses  
[[1Kings 22:3-4](#)].

Ramoth-gilead was one of the chief cities of the tribe of Gad, and it had been lost to Syria. The best thing to do would have been to leave things as they were -- status quo. At least Jehoshaphat should have stayed out of it. He should have followed the advice given to him by the prophet of the Lord. It was too bad that the Devil's man and God's man made an alliance. This was not Jehoshaphat's fight anyway. Gilead did not belong to him -- it belonged to Ahab, and it was Ahab's quarrel, not his.

### **Ahab Is Promised Victory By His Lying Prophets (22:5-12)**

And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD today [[1Kings 22:5](#)].

Jehoshaphat is God's man. He wants to know what the will of God is.

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him? [[1Kings 22:6-7](#)].

Jehoshaphat wants to know the mind of the Lord, and he suspects that they are not getting it through these false prophets. He has a real spiritual discernment, and so he asks, "Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?"

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so [[1Kings 22:8](#)].

Ahab then introduces Micaiah, the after-dinner speaker. And he does so in a most unusual way -- he says, "I hate him." Then Jehoshaphat says to Ahab, "You really don't mean that you hate a man of God." Someone has said that a man is not really known by his friends. Rather, he is known by his enemies. Every man ought to make sure that he has the right enemies. The best compliment that could be paid to Micaiah was for Ahab to say, "I hate him."

In the Lord's work I have always prided myself on the fact that I had the right enemies. I like the enemies I have because they do not stand for the Word of God. It is well to have the right enemies as well as the right friends. I can truthfully say that I thank God for my friends. I can also thank God for my enemies.

A toastmaster once said about a preacher he was introducing, "He doesn't have an enemy." God have mercy on him! You only had to listen to him for three minutes, and you could see why he had no enemies. He was Mr. Milquetoast -- he didn't stand for anything. Micaiah actually was the best friend Ahab ever had. Ahab just didn't know it. Micaiah could say as Paul did, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" ([Gal. 4:16](#)).

Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah [[1Kings 22:9](#)].

They brought Micaiah in. After all, he was very close at hand: Ahab was keeping him in prison. This is another of these great dramatic scenes:

And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.

And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.

And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand [[1Kings 22:10-12](#)].

You can just imagine those four hundred prophets running around saying to Ahab, "Go up against the king of Syria." One of the prophets was especially dramatic. Zedekiah ran around with iron horns, pushing at everyone with them, saying, "This is the way you are going to do it." What a scene -- two kings on their thrones and all those prophets running about crying, "Go up and fight. You will win."

### **Defeat Is Prophesied By Micaiah (22:13-28)**

And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good [[1Kings 22:13](#)].

The messenger that brought forth Micaiah said, "I'd just like to put a bug in your ear: all of the prophets are prophesying something good. They are telling the king to fight because he will win. That is what he wants to hear. You should join with them. Then you could get back into the king's favor. Here's your chance, Micaiah." And, I suppose, this guard thought he was helping Micaiah.

And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak [[1Kings 22:14](#)].

Micaiah's answer was not only dramatic, it was humorous. He said, "Whatever the Lord tells me to say, that is what I am going to say. I will tell it like it is." Then Micaiah came in and sized up the situation. He saw the two kings on their thrones and all of the false prophets of Baal running around the room. They were all saying nice things to Ahab. They had all read the book, How to Win Friends and Influence People. Micaiah had not read that book. Neither had he read The Power of Positive Thinking. In fact, he was pretty negative. There is a lot of power in negative thinking, friend. We need more of it today.

So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king [1Kings 22:15].

Notice what Micaiah says to the kings. To him it is a humorous scene, so he joins in just for fun. I think he was as sarcastic as any man could be -- just as sarcastic as Elijah could be. They were cut out of the same piece of cloth, by the way. Micaiah said, "Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king." Immediately the king saw that he was being ridiculed.

And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD? [1Kings 22:16].

The king said to Micaiah, "I know you are kidding me because you have never been on the side of the false prophets."

Suddenly Micaiah becomes very serious and solemn.

And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? [1Kings 22:17-18].

And the king of Israel says to Jehoshaphat, "I told you so -- I told you he would say nothing but evil about me."

Then Micaiah said, "I'm not through. I have something else to say to you that you ought to hear." And he gives a parable. You could call it a parable that is the reductio ad absurdum. It is a preposterous parable, a parable by contrast. (You will not find parables like this until you come to our Lord's teaching as recorded by Luke. Take, for example, the parable of the unjust judge: God is not an unjust judge.)

Notice what Micaiah says here:

And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner [[1Kings 22:19-20](#)].

Isn't that ridiculous? Can you imagine God calling a meeting of the board of directors or of the church board to ask them what He should do in a case like this? God already knows what He is going to do, and He does not need any advice.

And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so [[1Kings 22:21-22](#)].

Imagine this! God says, "My, you smart little fellow! I wish I had thought of that."

Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee [[1Kings 22:23](#)].

This was the nicest way Micaiah could call these prophets a bunch of liars.

But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son:

And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace [[1Kings 22:24-27](#)].

Zedekiah, the false prophet, struck Micaiah on the cheek. This was an extreme insult. In response to the insult Micaiah said by implication that the day would come when the false prophets would hide themselves in terror. That time would come when Ahab was dead and Israel was defeated. Then Zedekiah would know what the truth was.

And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you [[1Kings 22:28](#)].

Micaiah told Ahab that he was not coming back. If he did, then the Lord had not spoken by him. Then Micaiah said, "In view of the fact the you won't be coming back, Ahab, I want the people to witness that what I have spoken is the truth."

### Ahab's Defeat And Death (22:31-53)

Israel went to battle. They listened to the false prophets, and what happened? Israel lost the battle. And Ahab proved he was a deceiver all the way through. You see, the only

man in the battle who had on king's robes was Jehoshaphat, which made him a marked man, because Ahab had disguised himself. You might say that Ahab set Jehoshaphat up as a clay pigeon to be slain in the battle. It was not Jehoshaphat's fight at all, but he almost didn't come out of it alive.

But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.

And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel.

And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.

And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him [[1Kings 22:31-33](#)].

Poor Jehoshaphat almost lost his life in the battle because of Ahab's deception.

And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.

And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot [[1Kings 22:34-35](#)].

Ahab was not slain by a soldier that aimed at him. The king was not a target, and the soldier did not shoot at Ahab -- yet that arrow found him. You might say it was the first guided missile. I imagine that he was just an ordinary soldier with one last arrow left in his quiver. He pulled it out, put it in his bow, and simply let it go. He didn't know where it was going. Ahab's death would have to be listed as accidental, but in God's record it was providential: that arrow was aimed.

And you know, God still uses a very crude form of weapon -- He's still back in the bow and arrow days. In [Psalm 64:7](#), we read: "But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded." There are those today who think they have escaped the hand of God. But I want to tell you that God has an arrow with your name on it; it will find you one of these days. No matter how much you try to deceive and cover up, that arrow will find you. That is what happened to Ahab.

So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake [[1Kings 22:37-38](#)].

That which God had predicted through Elijah came to pass: Ahab died, and his blood was licked up by dogs in the same place that Naboth had died. Of course, Ahab had tried to stay away from that place, but his chariot was brought into Naboth's vineyard, and the

blood was washed out of it. The dogs were right there to lick it up. The prophecy was literally fulfilled. Whatever a man sows, my friend, he will reap. Why? Because God is not mocked. You cannot get by with sin; no one gets by with it. God sees to that; He is still on the throne.

Now we turn briefly to the reign of Jehoshaphat, and we find that he made a big mistake.

And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places [[1Kings 22:43](#)].

This was a token of compromise that God could not nor did He bless in the life of Jehoshaphat. It is quite obvious here that this man is a compromiser, and yet he is rated as a good king because he did serve God in his own personal life.

And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel [[1Kings 22:44](#)].

This was a mistake also -- he should not have done this. We read in 2 Chronicles that Jehu the prophet met Jehoshaphat as he returned from his visit with Ahab: "And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God" ([2Chron. 19:2-3](#)). Now the groves were a place of great immorality, but the high places where sacrifices offered to Baal were not taken away. Jehoshaphat had compromised.

Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber.

Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not [[1Kings 22:48-49](#)].

The son of Ahab who had come to the throne in the northern kingdom wanted Jehoshaphat to join him in a business deal -- it would be a peaceful mission this time -- but Jehoshaphat would not compromise again. He had learned his lesson. He said, "No, thank you. I don't care for this kind of an arrangement at all."

And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead [[1Kings 22:50](#)].

Jehoshaphat died and was succeeded by his son Jehoram.

Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel.

And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin:

For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger  
the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done  
[\[1Kings 22:51-53\]](#).

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in Samaria. He reigned for two years and followed in the footsteps of Ahab and Jezebel.

## Bibliography

(For Bibliography to 1 Kings, see Bibliography at the end of 2 Kings.)